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A democratic alternative to the corporate media

A publication of the  
Maine Independent Media Center  
<http://www.maineindymedia.org>

## Truck Fine Controversy Highlights Larger Problems

BY HILLARY LISTER

*"This is going to kill small business. The legislators have to realize, Maine is small businesses.*

*"I want to lay a little groundwork for you because we are truckers, my family. Frank and I started the business over 40 years ago and the boys have spun off from that, five sons and a grandson ... There is no profit here as it is. When the trucks are overloaded, we pay the fine. The reason they are overloaded is so that maybe, just maybe, at the end of the week there will be a little bit of profit for something that the kids want or the grandchildren want...*

*"That is our whole life, the trucking industry. We are darn proud of it too, by the way. I don't think that it is really fair. I think the fines are excessive as it is ... I am going to tell you how bad it is -- when you do your income tax, you don't even have to cheat on it. You haven't made a profit."*

Representative Sally Landry of Patten is not alone in her words. Indeed, the recent legislation to increase fines for overweight trucks has brought to light a number of problems facing Maine's logging truck operators.

The legislation in question is titled "An Act to Protect Highway Travelers and Maine's Highway System by Increasing Fines on Excessively Loaded Trucks." It was introduced by Senator William B. O'Gara, of District 29 in Cumberland County - a district in which only 4 of the 1,999 logging contractors and self-employed loggers in Maine live. It went into effect on January 31st, 2002.

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TRUCKS : CONTINUED ON PG. 9



THE WEIGH WAGON COMETH

photo credit: Alasdair Post-Quinn

A logging truck gets pulled over for weighing by a State Trooper in Houlton. Note the scales in the bed of the pickup truck -- this vehicle has only one purpose, which is to patrol the roads for "suspicious" trucks and check their weight for overloading.

## Belgrade Pines Avoid The Axe

BY LAURA CHILDS

A \$2.1 million Department of Transportation project is set to widen Route 11 through North Belgrade and into Oakland. Now a designated truck route, both sides of the road must be free of any obstruction in order to meet State Highway safety requirements. Along the route is an historic gateway, 1/10 of a mile of 90 plus year old healthy white pine trees.

Known to area residents as "The Wishing Pines," news of plans for their removal caused a serious uproar. "They would level Mt. Katahdin and pave Casco Bay if they thought it would make a better road," joked Deane Jones of Mt. Vernon. "My grandmother told me stories as

a boy how when her family's buggy would approach the pines everyone would close their eyes, pick up their feet, and make a wish. You had to keep your feet up and your eyes closed until you were all the way through the pines or your wish wouldn't come true."

John Devin, the DOT project manager sees the trees as an obvious safety hazard, "As far as the trees go, the DOT maintenance division would actually like to cut them all down. They shade the road in the wintertime and when it doesn't melt off there's ice problems."

Bill Taylor of Waterville responded, "Trees shade roads everywhere. That's when sand comes in handy."

PINES : CONTINUED ON PG. 3

## Angels of Public Interest to Descend Upon the FCC

A CALL TO ACTION  
BY ARTHUR STAMOULIS

*The Federal Communications Commission is a government agency that could help make media beautiful.*

*Instead, the FCC using its power to collapse control of the media into the hands of fewer and fewer transnational corporations. Dig this...*

### Turning Media Oligopolies into Media Monopolies

Just two days after the tragedies of September 11, while most Americans were still trying to cope with the shock and trauma, the never-say-die FCC decided to "review" its own regulations

on media cross-ownership. A rule that currently prevents a corporation from owning newspapers and television stations in the same city (aka "market") is now under serious threat. If overturned, locally-owned newspapers, and even newspaper conglomerates like the New York Times Company, Gannett and Knight-Ridder, could be bought up by such community-friendly giants as General Electric, Disney, Viacom and AOL/Time-Warner.

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**Please help keep this paper alive -- pass it on when you're done with it.**

If you are a business owner in possession of a large stack you no longer want, please do not dispose of them, but be in touch with us by mail or email so we can arrange retrieval.

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## The Maine Commons

a Publication of the Maine Independent Media Center  
<http://www.maineindymedia.org>

### Editors

HILLARY LISTER  
 ALASDAIR POST-QUINN

**Layout and Design**  
 ALASDAIR POST-QUINN

**None of this would be possible  
 without the print team and all  
 contributors and distributors.**

**Maine Independent Media Center  
 PO BOX 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**

(Maine IMC is not based solely in  
 Waterville, although we have a PO Box  
 there. Our members and distributors are  
 spread all throughout the state of Maine.)

Founded in 2001 as a side project of the Maine Independent Media Center, The Maine Commons was created to be a Maine media "commons" where diverse ideas of diverse people are free to meet and congregate. We especially focus on viewpoints and stories that have been ignored or misrepresented by the mainstream media, and issues of effects of corporate control of the media, in order to increase public consciousness and understanding of the events and issues at hand.

### MeIMC Mission Statement

The Maine Independent Media Center (MeIMC) is a not-for-profit collective of independent media makers and journalists offering grassroots news coverage and media education for the state of Maine, and enjoying yummy food. We are not the mouthpiece of any particular political party or commercial viewpoint - rather, we are the voice of all those individuals and communities who want to get involved and report the news as they experience it. Unlike the corporate media, we do not claim complete objectivity. Subjectivity comes with any human's observation of an event. We believe in open dialogue, and placing the means of communication back in the hands of people and away from the drive of profit.

The Maine Independent Media Center works to demystify media through media literacy education and by fostering the skills and providing equipment necessary for people to be the media. We seek to become a recognized and utilized media source in the state. Maine IMC provides an interactive website at <http://www.maineindymedia.org>, and an interactive Maine events calendar at <http://calendar.maineindymedia.org>, through which up-to-the-minute information can be posted and made available throughout the world. Acknowledging that a large amount of people in Maine, and the world, do not have access to the Internet, in addition to working to make this technology more accessible and available to all interested, we focus on providing and educating people in other mediums of media, including print, in the form of the regular publication The Maine Commons, public access television, and community and low power radio.

### **The Maine Commons Editorial Policy (short version):**

The Maine Commons will accept submissions of articles, photography, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, poetry, and graphics from any person via mail or email. Slides and undeveloped film cannot be accepted. Scanned graphics must be at a resolution of 180 dpi or higher, and should be clear in both color and grayscale. Articles should be no longer than 1400 words and must be submitted as computer files or crisply printed or typed high-contrast text. The editors reserve the right to correct errors and edit down pieces that are too long. Submission does not guarantee publication. Current issues and those relevant to Maine will be given priority; ongoing projects may be held until the next publication if space is an issue. Email to [editor@maineindymedia.org](mailto:editor@maineindymedia.org) or send hardcopy, floppy disks or CDs to **Maine Independent Media Center, PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**. Thanks!

# Letters to the Editors

Hello Fellow Workers,

Carolyn Chute's "War or War" essay in Issue 2 was terrific. It is a message that working people can understand, presented in a style that grabs one by the throat and shouts, "Listen Up!"

Whenever I think of our sons and daughters being sent to kill the sons and daughters of workers in foreign lands, I think of railroad baron Jay Gould, who boasted a hundred years ago, "I can hire one-half the working class to kill the other half".

Why is it so easy for parasitic profiteers like Bush and Cheney and Company to keep us on their payroll?

We are taught to despise ourselves, to think that dirty hands and greasy caps means we're ignorant and uncouth. We're told that to work on a garbage truck means we are garbage. We learn to believe that shoveling shit makes us shit.

Like workers everywhere, Mainers have been fooled into believing if we just work a little harder, a little longer, we can reach the carrot and then we can rest. After all, that's what we see on TV everyday. Nicely groomed people living in clean houses with roofs that don't leak and pipes that don't freeze. Shiny new cars that start even at 20 below. Bank accounts that never run dry. Servants who cater to every whim and clean toilets without being told.

No one wants a beating from the donkey driver's stick, so we just keep straining instead. But just like the donkey, we don't realize the carrot is tied to a stick which is tied to our harness; no matter how hard we pull against the load, the carrot moves ahead a bit further, always just out of reach.

When we get so frustrated we just can't stand it any more, along comes a neighbor on a new pony, won on a lottery ticket. "Just keep pulling that cart and play the lottery! You'll win someday, if you don't drop dead first!". They laugh at our misery and we pull harder, full of jealousy.

Jim Ellsworth  
 Manchester, Maine

To The Editor:

This is in response to a comment in Cal Clark's Op-Ed piece "Youth Music Scene Targeted in Capitol Area" (pg 3, Maine Commons Nov/Dec 01). Mr. Clark writes: "I guess kids are just going to go home, play video games, watch television, or become internet junkies. Sounds really healthy and fun!"

The writer makes a number of assumptions here; that using the internet is equivalent to watching hours of television. Same with video games; these come in many levels of depth and quality. Not everything can be boiled down to Super Mario Brothers. Many computer games being currently being developed require skill, concentration, and mental capacity. They are martial arts for the intellect (though not all games are created equal). There is nothing wrong with enjoying these games. One can engage in online gaming as well and participate in puzzle solving or adventuring with people all over the world. It is simply a different paradigm than playing a board game with the neighborhood kids. Not better or worse, as the author seems to imply with the tone of his comments.

As someone who utilizes the information space for many facets of communication, community, entertainment, research, and countless other tasks, I feel compelled to defend against the image of "internet junkie." One can certainly use the internet in a very crass manner just as if you were watching television. For instance, America On-Line molds its users experience so much that certain types of content are aimed at them and becomes their internet experience. For many others, the internet is a boundless sources of information. The important thing to recognize is that unlike television or other media where the content is delivered to you in a very linear fashion, you chose your experience with the internet. You can learn what you want to learn about, read what you want to, and participate in what you want to. The notions of time, place, and demographic are lost. You are not confined to a drop-down menu of choices or a TV guide. Content on the web and through various other internet-using services is largely dynamic and very participatory. User discretion is advised.

Sincerely,  
 chaos  
 An online reader of the Maine  
 Commons from Western Mass.



# Maine Commons Frequently Asked Questions ?

## How long has the Maine Commons been printing?

The Maine Independent Media Center formed in Spring of 2001. The Maine Commons started in August of 2001 in order to get our first 8-page paper out by Common Ground Fair. At that point, after much deliberation on the name, we called it "The Maine Free Press". We adopted the name "The Maine Commons" for the next issue when it became apparent that there were other papers with a similar names. This is the fourth issue of the paper.

## How often does the paper come out?

Currently it comes out every six weeks. We hope to be able to put out the paper monthly as we get more people involved and funding.

## How do you pay for it?

We pay for the paper through a combination of the following: advertisements in the form of inserts from non-commercial groups, individual donations, a grant from the Haymarket Foundation, and subscriptions. Future publications will also be funded by regular advertisements from non-profit groups and locally owned commercial businesses (see ad form page 23) and the addition of an alternative classifieds section (see page 20 for more information.)

## Where is it distributed?

The Maine Commons is distributed in every county of the state of Maine. We distribute to libraries, coffee shops, schools, convenience stores, community centers, laundromats, and other businesses and organizations that wish to carry the paper. If you would like to see the paper somewhere in your area, or would like to help with distribution (all distribution is done by volunteers across the state), please contact Maine Indymedia Center.

## Where is it printed?

The Maine Commons is printed at the Kennebec Journal printing offices in Augusta. We are not, however, affiliated with the Kennebec Journal.

## How many copies are there of each issue?

We currently have a circulation of 10,000 issues. If funding becomes available, we may increase this amount.

## Where is it based?

While the Maine Commons is printed in Augusta, and laid out and has a mailing address in Waterville, people involved with putting the paper together live around the state. We try to cover events, distribute, and get people involved with making the paper, in all areas of the state of

Maine.

## What's this paper made of?

The paper this is printed on is 28# newsprint. Newsprint contains a very small percentage (generally around 10%) of recycled material. Paper with a higher recycled content, while ideal, would cost significantly more. If we get sufficient funding in the future, we will upgrade to a paper with a higher recycled paper content. The ink is 100% soy based ink, thus this paper is suitable for mulching.

## How can I contact the paper?

You can write us at:  
Maine Independent Media Center  
PO Box 1444  
Waterville, ME 04903

You can email us at:  
[editor@maineindymedia.org](mailto:editor@maineindymedia.org)

## Why don't you have a phone number?

Due to the fact that Maine Indymedia has no central office, we have no phone line, and have been using one of the members' personal phone lines for Maine Indymedia calls. We are working on setting up an office in Prospect, Maine (and in the future in areas throughout the state, as well as a traveling media center), and the Prospect office will likely have a phone line. We are researching the option of a voice mail box, so that people may get in touch with Maine Indymedia by phone.

## How can I get involved?

The Maine Commons is produced by the print team of the Maine

Independent Media Center. To get involved with the print team, or other Maine Indymedia teams, see article, page 23. There is also a volunteer form on the back page.

## How can I subscribe?

See back page for subscription form.

## How can I advertise?

See page 23 for advertising form.

## Are you officially affiliated with any group?

The Maine Commons is the print publication of the Maine Independent Media Center. The mission statement of the Maine Independent Media Center (also known as the Maine Indymedia Center or Maine IMC) is printed on page 2. We have no political party affiliation, we are not right wing, left wing, or centrist. We welcome all views and encourage open discussion and debate, and work to give voice to those views and stories that are not adequately or fairly covered in much of the mainstream and corporate media. We work with, and exchange resources and media, with other independent media creators, such as Portland Public Access Television, WERU Community Radio, and Global Indymedia and other local Indymedia Centers (see [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org)). Many Maine Indymedia participants are members of other groups, and Maine IMC often collaborates with other groups on specific projects, but we do not have any formal allegiance to any group or groups.

## PINES : CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

Thanks to Senator Ken Gagnon of Waterville, a law was passed in September that requires the DOT to notify and consult with a town's Tree Warden before it starts work on any project that would alter the character of a community. That was all it took to cause a groundswell of support to let the "wishing pines" remain. People took matters into their own hands and hounded elected officials and the DOT to rework their plan to include the pines as a "gateway to the community."

It worked. In mid-February the DOT announced its plans to preserve the 1/10 of a mile stretch of road - with perhaps only one or two of the trees under scrutiny.

Citizen activism works - there are success stories. If the issue hits close enough to home, people will fight, and win.

BY LAURA CHILDS

## Paying For Peace, Not For War

BY LARRY DANSINGER

As proposals for larger and larger increases in military defense spending are announced, are you unwilling to pay more of your tax dollars to the Pentagon while human needs programs like health care, jobs, education, and environmental protection are cut or go unfunded? Are you disturbed that money is being poured into national security while nothing is done to address the root cause of terrorist attacks?

If so, you are not alone; there are millions who find current U.S. spending priorities to be misguided or dangerous. Thousands throughout the country are reducing or eliminating their tax liabilities so as not to finance these harmful policies.

Some are reducing their incomes so that they owe no money in taxes. Others are taking legal deductions which reduce or

eliminate any taxes owed to the government. Many engage in war tax resistance, where they simply refuse to pay any money owed to the IRS but instead "re-direct" that tax money to community groups who are short-changed by current federal government priorities.

While war tax resistance is not legal, war tax resisters in the U.S. have been successfully redirecting their tax dollars for over 50 years. Some have had that tax money seized by the IRS, a handful have been jailed or had property seized, but the majority have successfully avoided seizure of most or all of the money the IRS has claimed they owed.

In addition to federal income taxes, war tax resisters have refused to pay the federal excise tax (currently three percent) on telephone bills for over 30 years.

While the United States recognizes the

right of conscientious objectors to refuse to serve in the military, it does not give a similar right to taxpayers to refuse to have their money used to pay for others to kill on their behalf. Such legislation has been proposed since the 1970's but has never come close to passage.

If you are no longer willing to pay your taxes for programs you find wasteful and morally offensive, you can be a war tax resister. There are many ways to do it, and it is more effective and empowering to do it with others.

Information is available on the how-to's and the consequences by writing to the Maine War Tax Resistance Resource Center, PO Box 776, Monroe, ME 04951. Or you can call Larry Dansinger at 525-7776 or email him at [invert@acadia.net](mailto:invert@acadia.net).

Watch for another War Tax Resistance article, written by Alasdair Post-Quinn, to show up soon on:

[www.mainecommons.org/overflow](http://www.mainecommons.org/overflow)



## ANGELS : CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

"No more 'Seventh Heaven' in Cleveland, I'm afraid. The WB affiliate's just been bought by Disney!"

So really, what does this mean to you? A single transnational corporation -- with absolutely no allegiance to your own community, only to its stockholders and advertisers -- could own and control the daily and weekly newspapers you read, in addition to the television stations you watch, the radio stations you listen to, the movie theaters and video stores you frequent, the magazines you peruse, the music labels you buy, the internet service provider you use and even the sports teams you root for. Okay, but so what?

In a media monopoly, synergistic opportunities to make more money (like stories about the Pets.com sock puppet or the latest happenings on "Survivor") are hyped to the point of making you nauseous. At the same time, really important stories that just might happen to threaten the monopoly's profits (like coverage of the environmental impact of an advertiser's product, or recent FCC policy decisions) get seriously downplayed. That monopoly on information is bad for you and it's bad for democracy.

### Slamming the Door Shut on Open Access Internet

Right now, any company that wants to be an internet service provider can use America's telephone lines to do so. It's called open access. If you want email or web-hosting or instant messaging, you can use your telephone lines to dial-up to Earthlink, AOL, Jimmy's Internet Shack, and dozens of other companies willing to sell those services to you.

If you want high-speed internet access over your cable lines, that is another story. Most cable operators are not forced to share their cable lines with other broadband companies. So, in many areas, if you want super-cool cable internet access, there is only one show in town. You pay their monopoly rates, and if they choose to do so, the potential exists for them to limit the types of websites you get to visit.

Right now, major cable giants like Comcast (which is trying to swallow up AT&T's cable operations to become the largest cable company in the world) are pressing the FCC hard to make sure that doesn't change. But it gets worse ...

On Valentine's Day, the FCC showed its love for Big Business by proposing that regional telephone monopolies get to have complete control over their "souped-up" telephone lines. If the regulation passes, there will be no choice between telephone-based high-speed internet providers just like there is no

choice between cable-based high-speed internet providers. (Satellite providers? There are only two major ones in the US, and they're trying to merge.)

If the massive media conglomerates get their way, the Internet will become as concentrated as television and radio ownership, with everyone across the nation, and the world, watching and listening to the same exact things. Sites like [www.maineindymedia.org](http://www.maineindymedia.org) could quickly go bye-bye. That will probably sit just fine with FCC Chair Michael Powell, who has called public interest regulations "the oppressor." But does it sit fine with you?

### Update:

On Tuesday, February 19th, a federal appeals court struck down longstanding rules designed to limit the domination of any one U.S. media market by a single company. The struck-down rules stated that if a cable system and a TV station were jointly owned, the cable system was barred from carrying any local TV station in the market. The court also sent back to the FCC for reconsideration a rule that barred a TV-station owner from reaching more than 35 percent of TV households.

FCC chairman Michael Powell Wednesday called Tuesday's court ruling on ownership rules a "monumental" decision that puts new pressure on the agency to justify rules designed to prevent excessive consolidation. "I think yesterday's case was a monumental case in the media space. It's not the only shoe potentially to drop," Powell said.

### DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!!!

Friday, March 22; 3:00-6:00 PM  
445 12th Street NW; Washington, DC

Angels of Public Interest shall descend upon Washington, DC three hours past noon on the 22nd day of March in the vicinity of the Federal Communications Commission at 445 12th Street NW. The Angels shall resolutely teach those who command power within the FCC that Media and Communications Technology Should Forever Serve People Over Profits.

We encourage all Angels such as yourself to come to the gathering dressed in your best Angel garb -- halo, wings, glitter, the whole nine yards.

If your halo and wings are still at the dry cleaner, perhaps you could at least keep with the Angel color-scheme by wearing a solid white or black shirt. Still,

an Angel's presence and attitude are always more important than his or her duds, so if you can't dress up, don't worry about it. This is your time to shine!

### That Sounds Defensive. Don't You Angels Have Anything Pro-Active To Offer?

Damn straight we do! For years, our mortal friends in public interest groups, labor unions, schools, civil rights organizations, grassroots organizations, and elsewhere have offered alternatives to media business as usual.

All Angels should bring their own ideas and demands to the glorious March 22nd gathering: media democracy means making room for everyone at the table. But if you're in need of some ideas to chew on before then, here are just a few of the pro-active proclamations and commandments that will be issued that day:

**I. The FCC shall serve public interest** by dismantling the monopolistic concentration of media and communication systems.

**II. The FCC shall serve public interest** by promoting information as a world-wide common good. This shall include defending public airwaves from privatization and dismantling any Intellectual Property Rights policies that act to prohibit the sharing of knowledge.

**III. The FCC shall serve public interest** by supporting and encouraging the creation of media content that respects pluralism and diversity of expression, and balance in terms of gender, race, culture, language and geographic region.

**IV. The FCC shall serve public interest** by promoting the creative, widespread use of interactive technologies in such a way that these technologies are open to all and do not further create new sources of social fragmentation.

**V. The FCC shall serve public interest** by defending civil liberties and privacy from all invasive use of surveillance technology.

**VI. The FCC shall serve public interest** by banning advertising during children's television programs and by supporting the taxation on all advertising aimed at adults.

### I Am Human. Why Angels?

FCC Chairman Michael Powell has declared "The Market Is My Religion." This most unwise and unrighteous mortal made the mistake of claiming: "The night after I was sworn in, I waited for a visit from the angel of the public interest. I waited all night, but she did not come." Since he had trouble seeing one Angel that dreadful night, on March 22nd we shall descend upon him in droves.

We suggest you question your mortality. Maybe you are an Angel after all? If not, we're sure Michael Powell would benefit from being in the company of humans, too.

### I'm In. How Can I Get Involved?

Organize yourself and as many other Angels as you can muster to descend upon the FCC at 445 12th Street NW on Friday, March 22, 2002 from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. Bring whatever props and signs and street theatre you think best! This glorious gathering should enlighten, but also offer rapture! Go wild!

If you want to be included in the online discussions with the Organizing Angels, please sign up for the Media Activist discussion list at: [www.mediatank.org](http://www.mediatank.org)

Several Maine Indymedia participant are planing to head down to DC on the 22nd. If you want to be part of a group of Mainers heading down, want to find out what you can do to help from in state, or want to help help organize future events in Maine fighting the loss of public control of the media, please get in touch with Maine Indymedia.

*The increased allowances for media mergers have already been affecting Maine*  
While almost all of Maine's commercial television stations are national network affiliates, they still retain some power to make many decisions locally and control their revenue. This local control is weakening, though, and it is first showing up in local station's advertising decisions. Maine's NBC affiliates refused to run hard liquor commercials when the national television network had made the decision to start running them to increase revenues. The ability to make that decision could disappear under the new FCC rules. Many local affiliates were upset when, during the Winter Olympics, NBC moved all advertisements sold by local affiliates to the lowest rated prime-time half hour, so national advertisers could get the prime slots. A possibly more disturbing effect of this loss of local control is increasing decline of local news and local voices. WGME in Portland is owned by Sinclair Broadcast Group, one of the nations ten largest station owners. Last fall the station began replacing local editorials with editorials written and filmed at Sinclair's headquarters. This is bound to happen more as more local stations come under increasing control of global media corporations.



# Opinions & Editorials

## Election Preview: Maine Governor 2002

### Part 1: The Republicrats

BY JONATHAN COOK

As of mid February, Maine voters have eleven candidates in the field. After three primaries-Republican, Democrat, and Green Independent-the field will narrow to a possible six ballot options, one from each party, two independents (guessing one of the three will surely drop out), and, of course, a write-in.

With public money leveling the odds, the distance between first and last could be only a few hundred votes. That makes this race for Maine's Governor a rare occasion in politics because no matter who you are, you can expect a chance to win.

In spite of all that, to me it's not a horse race. I only use those terms to show this reality is like never before. This year, we need to give every candidate due consideration. To be good stewards of the massive power of our government, hell, just to stay alive, we have to pay attention and ask important questions like "Is there a single one of those candidates who doesn't wear a necktie?"

The necktie, to what does it tie you?

I quit believing pro-wrestling was real when I was thirteen. Shortly thereafter, I realized political wrestling is equally fraudulent. Democrats and Republicans squirm on the mat. The audience roots for one or the other, but mostly they want a dirty fight. They get one. And the political arena remains abuzz with scandals, investigations, and accusations. It's a glamour business. Make a spectacle, collect a check, get a pat on the back from the media bosses. So those folks are in it together and deserve one name.

Republicrats.

\* Peter Cianchette wants to cut off benefits to injured workers so businesses can save on their premiums. Why should we help a dangerous workplace stick around? Dangerous workplaces should be driven to extinction.

\* John Baldacci speaks with a political tongue about "micro-lending" and "reduced estate tax." He "fights" to lower medication costs. Isn't that a little extreme? Can't he work for it or focus on it? Why the combative imagery? When will we have had enough of the fighters?

\* John Hathaway suggests the point of education is to graduate people who look for jobs. Wouldn't it be better if the graduates of Maine schools were business owners instead of corporate lackeys?

\* Jeffery McKenzie. Nothing known except his name as seen on <http://www.politics1.com>. I wonder if he wears a tie.

In researching these guys in the paper and on the web, I began to see them all, with the exception of McKenzie, as posers posing with the flag like Uncle Sam's first nephew. They're catalog models selling something wrapped in red, white and blue.

Listen to the pitch and you'll get a show as each of them reaches into a bagful of gimmicks with vague names, bragging about the most hollow of accomplishments. Baldacci's resume reads: "Worked closely with colleagues on the Agriculture Committee who also represent fruit and vegetable growers to ensure their needs were adequately represented when the Committee worked on crop insurance reforms."

Come again? Ensure, insure, you sure? Paper pushers. Subsidy blubsidy. These guys are all complicators.

Want to help Maine farmers? Give poor people locally grown food. Duh.

The Republicrats are all bent on making Maine an inviting place for industrial investors to come here and save us from our backwater ways. Who wouldn't love to waste away in a factory?

Scram.

We can invent our own jobs. Why don't we just enjoy our high-tax-keeps-the-undignified-and-hazardous-jobs-out status of our beautiful state? We'll work for ourselves, thank you. We should send a political entrepreneur to the Governor's office. Trade? Sure, we'll trade. You buy our hemp products, and we'll continue to be a place people can retreat from the rat race. Why should we emulate Massachusetts?

Maybe I'm reading too much into it, but these guys all dream of one day flying aboard Air Force One. Maybe it's their neckties that give them away. Maybe when McKenzie emerges from the fog, he won't be wearing any collar at all.

Right here and right now, let's face it. The necktie is to men what high heels are to women -- a discomfort designed to accentuate a sexual feature.

High heels make the rear-end stick out. Neckties point to the crotch. And as tough as this society can be on womenfolk, you have to go to Africa to find female genital mutilation. At home in America circumcision mutilates male genitalia all day and night. I have sympathy for these guys, but I won't vote for 'em.

Stay tuned for Parts 2 and 3 in upcoming issues.

## Corporate Predators: Enron Case Just the Tip of the Iceberg

BY RANDALL SHELDEN

Most commentary and reporting on the Enron case keeps focusing on the alleged connection with the White House and other politicians who have received over \$1 million in campaign contributions in recent years. The news media is having a field day trying to turn this event into another Watergate, with some calling it "Enrongate." But in my opinion, a terse comment made by Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill points to where our analysis of this case should be going. He is quoted as saying that he was not too surprised at Enron's downfall, saying that: "Companies come and go. It's...part of the genius of capitalism." Senator Joseph Lieberman called O'Neill's remarks "cold-blooded." Lieberman, however, supports the very system O'Neill is praising, in that his role as a senator essentially is that of a representative of big business and hence the "genius of capitalism." Part of the so-called "genius" of capitalism is, of course, greed, with profits going to a narrow group of individuals being the only goal. Too bad the workers and most of the stockholders get screwed. It is corporate predatory behavior at its best, but merely masking what really goes on within corporate America: criminal behavior, pure and simple.

But this case is merely the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Corporate criminality has been part and parcel of the capitalist system since the very beginning. In fact, we can say that capitalism and corporate crime are synonymous. After all, how can such huge profits continue to grow without a good deal of deviance?

Most are by now aware of the controversy concerning the recall of thousands of Firestone tires. At least 103 deaths have been attributed to defects in some of the Firestone tires, particularly those found on Ford Explorers. Another recent scandal involves our favorite friends, your friendly neighborhood pharmaceutical companies, in this case Abbott Labs. An investigation into drug prices by the New York Times found that Abbott paid off some competitors for not producing generic -- and hence cheaper -- drugs and keeping them away from consumers for an entire year. One drug was Hytrin, used for high blood pressure and prostate enlargement. This costs patients around \$30 per month (a small but sig-

nificant amount for seniors) and enabled Abbott to reap profits of around \$1 million each day it was off the market! (Abbott paid off the producers of the cheaper drug around \$6 million per month.) Then there is the case of Tyson Foods for allegedly engaging in the recruitment of "illegal aliens" from Mexico to work in some of their chicken processing plants (as if this is something new in corporate America).

There have been many warnings throughout the past 200 years. Starting with Adam Smith and Thomas Jefferson, both of whom warned of the possible concentration of power into the hands of a few corporations and the dire consequences if it happened; this was followed by John Dewey who stated that government (or politics) is but the "shadow cast upon society by big business." More recently, in his book *Corporation Nation*, Charles Derber argued that corporate power is the "new problem with no name" (borrowing Betty Friedan's words describing women's secondary status in American). Ralph Nader has said that: "Corporate decision-making determines many of the key questions that affect our lives. These decisions are made not through the democratic process but in the private suites of major business corporations here and abroad." Such major decisions include, continues Nader, "how our own natural resources are to be used; where toxic pollution will be released into the air, water and soil; whether jobs will be created, taken away, or moved to other countries; which political parties and candidates will receive the most money; the way crops are grown."

And it is in the context of corporate decision-making that some of the worst crimes in all of humanity have been and continue to be committed. When questions like "Who are the 'dangerous' people in society?" or "Who threatens us most with death, serious bodily injury and our money or property?" the answer is very clear: corporations and their hired thugs! Call them "corporate predators" if you will. Some of the worst offenders in recent years include Archer Daniels Midland (price fixing; paid a \$100 million fine, the largest in history), Union Carbide (whose pesticide factory in India released 90,000 pounds of the dangerous chemical methyl isocyanate, which in turn killed several thousand people



# D.I.Y. Media

A How-To Series To Help You Be The Media

## Videotaping at large actions and rallies

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### BEFORE YOU TAPE

**BATTERIES & TAPE** - Ask yourself what you are going to need for your shoot - ahead of time! See the checklist, grab some interview tips, prep your camera/accessory bag and charge the batteries - the night before, if possible. Be sure you have directions to the event and consider the legal aspects of the situation - (i.e. do you have your lawyer's number with you in case you get arrested for "interfering"? - do you have a copy of the local ordinance on the rights of onlookers? - do you need to print up a press pass or wear a "legal observer" arm band?)

### GETTING STARTED

#### DATE & TIME / ENDS OF TAPE -

At the beginning of each taping situation, have the date and time appear for 3 seconds and then get rid of it. Don't leave the date/time on for much longer or it will make the footage less valuable for use later in making videos or using on the news. Another way to establish important facts quickly (without having to press any buttons) is by simply speaking into the camera's microphone (e.g. "so-and-so is getting arrested for xxx, it is Friday, May 7, 1 p.m., Union Square ..."), then go back to being quiet and letting the camera record what is happening. For legal value within the court system, in-camera date & time stamps are more credible. Be sure and check that the camera is programed for the current time.

Allow 1 minute to run at the beginning of a new tape before you start recording. Know that the tape at the very beginning and end of your cassette will have more glitches and sound and color irregularities. If you are near the end of your tape, and you like what you are recording - get a new tape.

Actually turning the camera off and removing the battery will keep your

batteries going a lot longer than having the camera on standby or off with the battery attached.

Carry lens paper and clean your lens frequently.

**FRAME UP AND ESTABLISH** - As an action, bust-scenario, or any shooting situation gets underway, scan the scene for shots that will establish for viewers where you are, what the issue is, etc. Is there a sign or building or tree or vehicle or tripod, etc. that indicates where you are or what the issue is? Frame up on subjects (i.e. banners, people) so



#### **HOW NOT TO RECORD THE POLICE**

An unprotected photographer learns about riot-grade pepper spray the hard way.

that nothing is cut-off and so that there is not too much empty space. Hold still. Get a good, long shot - 10 seconds or more on each important shot. Video editors and journalists will love you if you give them enough to work with and allow them to edit it. Get good stills (shots that don't zoom or pan).

Focus on identifying features and pan from them to the action (e.g. the sign near the government building where people are protesting). When you pan across a scene or from one subject to another, move slow and steady, with a consistent panning speed. Take time to start the pan where you want to, and to end where you want to also, without over-shooting your ending subject and having

to move the camera back. Practice your pan with the camera in the standby mode - maybe pan twice at different speeds, but don't pan too much.

The same goes for zooming in and out. Going from a good wide shot of an action area and zooming in (at a steady pace) to a tighter shot of an arrest happening etc. can be a good way to place the smaller scene in context for viewers. But again, don't zoom too frequently. It is easier to find things quickly and your footage will be more stable, if your camera is open wide and not left in a zoom position. Get close to your subjects

warm clothes, rain gear, layers or shorts and t-shirts. Or this may mean looking "mainstream and respectable," so as to attract as little attention to yourself as possible. In some situations you might want to obtain a press pass and present yourself as an "objective" journalist type. In other situations this might entail "setting up a blind" - a place where you can film the action area and remain hidden to authorities.

Get as close to the action or the subject as possible without getting caught or arrested or hurt. If you cannot get close, keep the subject/action framed as tightly and aesthetically as possible by filling the screen. Zooming in is often necessary, but increases the chances of shaking and an "artificial" look.

If the police are wrongfully arresting someone - or whenever you need to identify the police on hand - read off their badge numbers into the camera; this is faster than trying to zoom in and out on people that are moving. An assistant can help with this.

Be mentally and physically prepared to remain non-violent in threatening situations and stick to the camera. Stay calm and focused. Having an assistant can be very helpful. They can run out hot footage, watch your back while you stare into your viewfinder and look out for important shots that you might be missing.

Don't try to fulfill any other roles when you are the video witness support person. Activists, organizers and legal staff will be needing good video documentation of what occurs. Things may be getting crazy and violence may be happening, but the worse the situation gets, the more important it is for you to record the event on tape. If you will be the only person who can help people in danger, you did not plan your action well. You must remain taping to get that footage out of there and to the news, your legal help, even the cops if they were not involved. Be quiet and be attentive to getting good footage. A runner might help you by

and let the camera be an objective eye, getting good images without putting the focus on the act of filming itself. And remember, TV viewers aren't browsing over snapshots and they won't have the benefit of the real context. You must establish that for them.

### DURING YOUR SHOOT

#### WITNESS SAFELY AND EFFECTIVELY -

Every action and shooting situation is different; be ready to move fast or to stay still, to let authorities know that they are being filmed or to stay hidden. Consider all your options. Take steps to ensure that you are able to stay on site and document what occurs. Dress appropriately. This might mean

**GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM**

The American Super Patriot, smoke spewing from his ears, confronted the Chronic Complainer, "Listen buddy, if you don't like it here, why don't you go back where you came from?"

To which the Complainer responded, "You know, fella, you're right. Why hang around a place where I'm unhappy?" And he returned to the land of his ancestry.

Thus it was from the very beginning of the republic, with every person who had a grievance against the status quo. They went back where they came from. So it was no wonder, then, that by the year 2000, the United States of America was overflowing with contentment and happiness, for it had no Bill of Rights, slavery was enshrined and flourishing, labor unions were non-existent, women could not vote and every body of water was polluted.

- A FABLE BY HERSCHEL STERNLIEB

**Visit the DMV to Get Your New National ID**

BY HILLARY LISTER

Ever try to open a bank account, get a driver's license, get a job, file taxes, apply for financial aid, get insurance, register for school, even rent a video? Chances are you've had to give your social security number - you probably didn't even question it. Yet when social security numbers were introduced in 1935, proponents reassured a leery public that they would only be used by the social security program, and they would not be required for other functions of daily life. Indeed, a social security number is not required by law for a person to live and work in the US. So why does it seem so required? Because there is also no law preventing other institutions like private companies, the Motor Vehicle Bureau or the Department of the Treasury from requiring you to provide one if you wish to do "business" with them.

Now, in post-terrorist-attack America, the Department of Transportation, acting on instructions from Congress, is working with states to develop new dri-

**ICEBERG : CONTINUED FROM PG. 5**

and injured hundreds of thousands), the Savings and Loan bankruptcy case has cost taxpayers more than \$1 billion. Then there is famous Ford Pinto case in the 1970s an internal memo showed that Ford executives knew about the potentially lethal design defect in its fuel system. The memo showed that it would cost the company \$137 million to correct it. They decided not to correct the problem. An estimated 500 people died because of the defect.

Statistically speaking, the gravest threats to us are not from robbers, burglars, rapist and the like. Rather, they are from those who wear a suit and tie to work, or a white medical coat, or who occupy plush offices in corporate headquarters or who occupy powerful positions within the government. Their weapons are ballpoint pins, scal-pels, computers or merely their voices (as when they decide to go to war).

According to FBI figures, around 20,000 people are murdered each year. However, according to one recent study about 100,000 Americans die from such occupational diseases as black lung, brown lung, asbestosis and various other cancers related to various occupations (about six per hour). The overall work-related death rate is around 115 per 100,000, compared to a homicide rate of around 8 per 100,000. Add to this the estimated 400,000 who die each year from tobacco-related diseases.

And speaking of tobacco, what should we call this huge industry, other than the largest "drug trafficker" in the world. A recent estimate from the World Health Organization is that by the year 2020 the world-wide deaths from tobacco will go from 3 million to 10 million;

ver's licenses. Licenses that will be "electronically smarter," likely containing fingerprint or retinal scan identification, tied into a nationwide information database. Proponents insist that it wouldn't be required, just like a social security number isn't required.

As a January 8th Time Magazine report lightheartedly explained, "Most of the privacy rights -- if there really are such things -- vulnerable to a nationalized ID card have already been trampled under the wheels of increased security, more efficient law enforcement and better business long ago. Most of them can be regained simply by paying cash -- and keeping your fingerprints off the murder weapon."

more than two-thirds in the developing countries in the world! In this country reliable estimates put the death toll from tobacco at around 300,000-400,000 per year. We send thousands of people to lengthy prison terms for possessing small amounts of marijuana, cocaine and heroin, drugs that cause at most around 5,000 deaths each year.

Annual costs of property crimes (like burglary and larceny) come to around \$5 billion. In direct contrast, the most recent estimate of the yearly costs of corporate and "white collar" crime is in excess of \$900 billion, dwarfing the costs of ordinary crime (with some estimates putting the total above \$1 trillion). The list of specific crimes seems endless: bribery of government officials, defense contract fraud, health care provider fraud, and corporate tax evasion, price-fixing (costing consumers over \$100 million each year), price gouging ("systematic overcharging" with mark-ups as high as a phenomenal 7,000 percent), false advertising and product misrepresentation, corporate stealing from employees (e.g., cheating workers out of overtime pay, violations of minimum wage laws, etc.), unfair labor practices, surveillance of employees, theft of trade secrets, monopolistic practices, defrauding investors (e.g., the Equity Funding case, which inflated stock prices by claiming \$200 million in nonexistent assets), and many more. Then there are cases like retail fraud on the part of small businesses, service business fraud (especially prevalent in the car repair industry) and various forms of medical crime, especially Medicaid and Medicare fraud, which is estimated to be as high as \$25 billion per year.

These are neither isolated, nor recent revelations. The extent of corporate crime was first noted in a now clas-

sic study by Edwin Sutherland, which was published in 1947 under the title White Collar Crime. This study focused on law violations by 70 corporations and found a total of 980 specific violations, about one-third of which were restraint of trade. He also discovered that the majority were what we call recidivists - those who repeat their crimes. About 30 years later still another study documented the extent of corporate violations. This study found that over a two year period more than 60 percent of the 582 largest corporations had at least one violation. Automobile, oil refining and drug companies accounted for about one-half of all violations. Unfortunately, this study excluded such industries as banking, insurance, transportation, communications, and utilities.

All of the above cases are examples of criminal offenses, but the offenders came from the highest echelons of society, were "pillars of the community." And in the minds of most people they were not really "criminals" or at least they were not perceived as "dangerous." Yet collectively these particular offenses cost thousands of lives and several hundred billion dollars each year!

Citizens need to be aware of the extent of these crimes and join others in an organized attempt to deal with it. We need to recognize that most corporations are little more than "private tyrannies" with no accountability other than the "bottom line" - profits, which accrue mostly to a small segment of the population.

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This argument can only lead to a mentality that accepts continuing loss of freedoms. It says, basically, 'We've lost so many freedoms already, why complain about a few more?' A mentality that simply leads to constant complicity. Once the step is taken to create a national ID card, there is much less to prevent the next step of requiring a national ID card. You can't require something that doesn't exist.

Of course, this new de facto national ID is being promoted as "just a license," just a change to a voluntary card, just as the introduction of the social security number was "just a voluntary number" created to help the social security administration organize its information.

According to Time Magazine, "The plan [implementing de facto national IDs as new drivers' licenses], Congress hopes, will be cheaper and easier to implement, and less likely to incur the talk-show ire of civil libertarians and states' rights purists, (the same type who squawked in 1908 when the FBI was born.)" One wonders what other freedoms we might now have if the civil libertarians and state's rights purists had only squawked louder then. Hopefully, the fact that the new driver's license is not yet being called by its true name - the national ID card - will not prevent more people from squawking about it today.



### DIY : CONTINUED FROM PG. 6

running dead batteries to a nearby car with an AC Power Inverter plugged into its cigarette lighter, ready to charge people's batteries.

Follow-up information: If protesters are being arrested, find out where they are being taken and who else is doing documentation work on site. Are there ways to contact people later, to share footage, facts, etc.? Is there a central number to stay in touch with?

**CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE** - There will be times when people involved in direct action will be planning on getting arrested. In these situations it may be very helpful to interview them before the arrest and on-site in order to document their reasons for breaking the law. If they will be using a "Necessity Defense" in court (i.e. they had to commit this small crime in order to prevent a larger one), then establishing evidence of their intent will be valuable. Ask them who they are, what the date is, what they are doing here, how important are the issues to them, and what extreme conditions and frustrated attempts to work within the system (if any) have led them to this point in their campaign. Focus on what they perceive to be the larger issues involved. Try to put these interviews on a separate tape in case the whole tape is subpoenaed.

**DISCRETION AND COURTESY** - There are some things you simply should not tape. Be clear about which actions and situations are meant for the record and which might better be left undocumented. Video tapes can easily become evidence for the police if the videographer is sloppy. Announce to everyone that you have a camera and would like to start taping. When in doubt, ask; and don't take it personally if people are suspicious or hostile to the camera - sometimes people are shy, other times they have very good reasons for not being videotaped. Distinguish between what is important for the action itself and what is nice to have for other purposes (like a documentary).

Sometimes you can get incredible footage by pretending that the camera is not on. Practice taping with the camera in your hand near your hip and pointed up at the person, as if

you are simply resting it there. Keep a wide zoom and hold steady, while trying to act "natural." Put electrical tape over the recording indicator light so no one knows it's on. Sometimes the audio alone is priceless.

**GET GOOD AUDIO** - Sound is so important in good video and typically underestimated in non-professional documentation. If you have some time, get samples of police radio, support people talking to authorities, authorities issuing commands, etc. Think of the video camera as a tape recorder also. Editors can sometimes do wonders with just the audio. And, radio shows are often dying for good audio to use.

Two types of microphones are going to greatly enhance the quality of your audio:

1) Unidirectional Microphone - this type of mic can be pointed at the source of sound that you are aiming for and filter out the sounds you don't want. This type of mic will also allow an audio monitor to sample violent epithets, comments and conversations that authorities and/or workers might not say with a camera up close.

2) Wireless - Remote/Clip-On Microphone - Primary support people, peace keepers, activists who go inside government buildings, etc. can get precious sound samples and the authorities may never even know that they are being recorded by a camera that is 200 feet away. The clip-on mic plugs into a small transmitter - the receiver plugs into the camera's mic jack.

Monitor audio with headphones to be sure things are okay. Buzzing and even radio interference can occur with external microphones (be careful not to cross headphone wires with microphone wires; also try to keep the mic away from the running/moving parts of your camera).

Built-in mics aren't great. But if you only have your camera mic., get close (real close) to your audio subjects. You have the option of forfeiting the visual all together and placing the camera mic near your speaker's mouth.

You can also shoot from the bottom of their head - (trying to frame-up a nice upward shot while keeping the mic close).

**TELL A STORY** - If you are filming a banner hang, for example, get good long shots of the banner being painted, of the climbers preparing and climbing, of the banner coming out of their pack, of the people looking up at the banner, of the cops arriving, etc. Don't forget to get people's reactions to what is happening. Now your visual images will tell a story and a skilled editor will be able to set it to music or add narration. Ideally, you will have both video and audio that will tell the story on their own.

**INTERVIEWS** - When you have some free time, try to interview people as much as possible. People are often reluctant at first, but they soon get used to it and they themselves are usually glad to see it later. Interviews can be a great source of narration or "voice over" material. Get the camera microphone close to their mouth or use a directional mic.

**GET CUTAWAYS (VISUALS) LATER** - When your subject is talking about something, and points to the object they are describing or commenting on, keep the camera on their face as they talk. When they finish, take a few moments to get a clear shot of what they were talking about.

**KEEP YOUR TAPES ORGANIZED** - Keep a list of what you record and label your tapes promptly. Do it. Make sure you label the date, location, camera person, brief description and tape's number if there is more than one. Keep extra blank tapes on you and ready to use. Keep sensitive (e.g. "The Bust") material separate from other tapes in case they are confiscated or subpoenaed. Try to use professional quality tapes and always keep your tapes clean, dry, cool and away from the sun or extreme heat. Videotapes are extremely fragile things and should be treated delicately.

#### After Your Shoot:

**TAKE CARE OF SOURCE TAPES** - Now that you've got the great footage - keep it usable! Play it through a clean camera - one time - while making VHS view tapes

through a VCR - then put it away. Is an extra effort required to preserve your footage (esp. if it's regular 8mm or VHS-C) by transferring the best clips to SVHS? Are tapes labeled and organized? - This can be very important. Some groups have actually had all of their tapes subpoenaed because they couldn't find exactly what the authorities asked for, so they just took them all. If you must make copies for people, copy from your VHS copy using two VCR's. Save your source tapes for editing with later. Glitches are the videographer's nightmare and they mostly come from the source tapes that have been played & rewound too much, or banged around, etc.

**PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT** - Do you need to prepare the equipment for the next shoot, or for someone else? Drain and recharge your batteries. Remove completed tapes from the camera and cue the next one up. You might need to remove the battery from your microphone for long term storage. Follow through on any contacts you may have made at the shoot (e.g. media, legal support, other activists, etc) Review and evaluate the quality of your footage.



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The tables below list the old and new weight fines for 6 axle Tractor-Semitrailer Trucks. The first schedule applies only to trucks that are carrying special commodities. Special commodities include, among other items, forest products and many aggregates. The fines are given to the person to whom the overloaded truck is registered. They apply to the percentage a truck is overweight either in gross weight or axle weight. The tandem axle weight cannot exceed 41,000 pounds and the tri-axle weight cannot exceed 50,000 pounds. If a truck is in violation of both the gross weight and axle weight, the larger fine is given. In addition to the cost of the fines listed in the schedules, those receiving the fines are charged a 14% court fee plus \$5.

**Schedule Applies To Gross Weight Violations for 6-axle Tractor-semitrailer Trucks Carrying Special Commodities**

Percent over 100,000 lbs	Old fine schedule	New fine schedule
1-10%	\$100 + \$20 for each % over 1%	\$100 + \$20 for each % over 1%
11-20%	\$300 + \$25 for each % over 10%	\$280 + \$125 for each % over 10%
21-30%	\$550 + \$30 for each % over 20%	\$1,530 + \$135 for each % over 20%
31 - 40%	\$850 + \$35 for each % over 30%	\$2,880 + \$150 for each % over 30%
41% or more	\$1,200 + \$10 for each % over 40%	\$4,380 + \$175 for each % over 40%

**Schedule Applies to Axle Weight (and gross weight for 6-axle Tractor-semitrailer Trucks Carrying General Commodities) Violations**

Percent over allowed basic weight	Old fine schedule	New Fine schedule
1-10%	\$10 for each percent	\$10 for each percent
11-20%	\$100 + \$15 for each % over 10%	\$100 + \$65 for each % over 10%
21-30%	\$250 + \$20 for each % over 20%	\$750 + \$75 for each % over 20%
31 - 40%	\$450 + \$25 for each % over 30%	\$1,500 + 105 for each % over 30%
41 - 50%	\$700 + \$30 for each % over 40%	\$2,550 + \$140 for each % over 40%
51% or more	\$1,000 + \$10 for each % over 50%	\$3,950 + \$180 for each % over 50%

**TRUCKS : CONTINUED FROM PG. 1**

Here is an example of how the new fines might work:

If a trucker registered to haul 100,000 pounds is caught hauling 112,000 pounds, one of the following fines could result:

1) The trucker receives a gross weight fine for being overloaded by 12%. Under the new schedule, it would increase by a little over 150% to \$609.20.

2) Let's say that this load was misbalanced, however, with 50,960 pounds each on the tri-axle and on the tandem axle. While the tri-axle would be within legal limits, the tandem would be overweight by 21%. In this case, the trucker would receive the axle weight fine, which, including court fees, would increase by about 300%, \$945.50.

This legislation is intended to mainly affect major overloaders, and the fact that the increase in gross weight doesn't take effect until one is overloaded by more than 10% reflects this. However, one can be overloaded by less than 10% and receive a rather hefty fine for having their axle weights misbalanced. Smaller gross weight violations receive some leeway with trucks under 5% overweight falling into no-fine and half-fine categories. While truckers registered for 90,000 pounds receive a 10% tolerance that allows them to haul 100,000 pounds

even without the registration, if they are caught weighing over 100,000, the fine they receive is calculated by the percentage over 90,000. The increased fines have caused many truckers to pay the \$202.50 fee to upgrade their registration from 90,000 pounds to 100,000 (the maximum in Maine).

**Reasons for Legislation**

According to Bruce Van Note of the DOT, the new legislation was passed in response to three concerns: safety, protection of the road and bridge systems, and to level the playing field for law-abiding truckers who haul legal weight. The question on many people's minds, though, is will this legislation help address these problems, and at what expense?

**Safety**

Safety concerns have long been on the minds of those living on heavily traveled truck routes. According to Mike Scippa, president of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways, heavier trucks are more difficult to control, as they take longer to stop, longer to accelerate into the flow of traffic, and have a higher center of gravity, which makes them more prone to overturning. Overloaded trucks also experience more stress on brakes, axles and joints, making them more susceptible to mechanical failure, he says.

The safety concerns are voiced

even by those opposed to the increased fines. While Troy Jackson, a logger in the Allagash, does not believe for a minute that the increased fines will do much prevent the dangers from overweight trucks, he does believe that the safety issue is important and needs to be addressed. "...I'm going up the road with my kids in the back, I meet one of those trucks and you're scared right to death that a log comes off it or it rolls over ... A month and a half ago, a bus was picking up some kids, a truck comes around the corner and upset right behind. It spilled the whole load there. I mean if it would have hit the bus it would have killed everybody in it. Guy was hauling 130,000 pounds ... Two years ago I was going up the road a truck comes out of one of the logging roads, turned onto the main road, ripped down one of the lines, power lines fell right in the old senior citizens home, right in their yard ... Luckily no one has gotten hurt, but how long is that going to last?"

**Protection of the Roads**

According to a Maine DOT official, it costs taxpayers \$8 million a year to repair damage from overweight trucks. "It is a significant problem," said Van Note. "The bottom line is that overloading busts up the roads." Truckers argue that they are already paying to maintain the roads by paying diesel tax (logging trucks get 3-5 mpg, and the heavier the load, the more fuel they use) and registration fees.

Most heavy truck traffic is limited to federally-maintained secondary roads. No trucks over 80,000 pounds are allowed on I-95. Locally maintained roads are posted during much of the season, when the snow and the ground surface start to melt. The result of this posting concentrates all heavy truck traffic on a few roads. Currently a bill is being heard that would allow towns to sell permits for trucks to travel otherwise posted roads, a plan which would help to decrease the concentration of traffic on one route, pay for the maintenance of the posted roads, and allow truckers to save gas by taking more direct route between points. Representative Landry questions why the state doesn't allow logging trucks on the Interstate, "If the trucks could go down the interstate they would not be breaking up the road. Right now they're only allowed to travel secondary roads, and those roads weren't designed for that amount of truck traffic." Interstate travel could also improve safety, by taking trucks off residential routes.

**Leveling the Playing Field**

Defenders of the fines argue that as the number of aggravated overloaders increases, a situation is created that affects the whole trucking market. They explain that due to the availability of truckers willing to haul more than the legal load, the final prices paid for the loads begins becomes suppressed.

While not in favor of the structure of the fines, Steve Coleman, of Landvest, explained, "Individuals who are having to pay for those services [getting wood transported], obviously are looking to get them done as cheap as they can and negotiate. If company A will do it for X per unit, and company B will do it for X minus something per unit, you tend to go with company B. Now if company B is able to do that by overloading more, that's not an issue to the landowner per se. It's the trucking company that's responsible for what they're hauling, so certainly the simple solution might be said, 'Well, if they were paid enough to make what they needed to make and stay legal there wouldn't be a problem.' I would tend to argue that that will never be a good solution because there will always be the truckers, that although they might be being paid enough to cover their cost, under that system they know that if they haul more than they'll make more. And that tends to be human nature."

Opponents of the new legislation do not feel that this response adequately addresses the reasons most truckers overload. While they agree that there will always be someone who overloads just to make an extra buck, and that may have some minor effect on the market, they don't see that as the reason such a vast number of logging truck operators in the state are driving overweight loads. "Most guys would rather haul smaller loads," explained Troy Jackson. "I mean first, the safety factor - I don't think there are many guys hauling who aren't scared to death. And secondly, the amount of money that they're making with big loads is ruining their equipment. Just for those two reasons right there, most people would tell you that they'd rather haul legal -- they're just not able." In talking to a number of logging truck operators throughout the state, only one person interviewed said that they never drove with overweight loads. As two truckers in northwestern Maine who asked to remain anonymous explained, "I have to go over to make any sorta money. Almost everyone I know has been caught at some point in the past couple years." "We overload a little bit. You have to in order to make a living."

Legislators argue that the fine increase is not as drastic as opponents make it out to be, since it is the first weight violation fine increase since 1975, and some of the increase is just a reflection of inflation. Detractors counter with the fact that, adjusted for inflation, loggers are now making less per cord or pound than ever before. According to Peter, a logger in Solon, in the past 30 years in Maine, the cost of diesel has increased by about 400%, the cost of a truck has increased by about 300%, and equipment, and insurance, and maintenance in general has increased 300-400%. At the same time, the amount that truckers are getting paid has increased on


**TRUCKS : CONTINUED FROM PG. 9**

average by all of 30%. Observers have cited a number of reasons for this, including the structure of and changes in the forest products market, increases in people working as independent contractors, changes in the structure of independent contractor agreements, a decrease in the number of buyers in some regions of the state, the effects of the Canadian trucking industry, and the effects of NAFTA.

**The Structure of the Market**

These days in the Maine woods, almost all loggers and truckers are independent contractors (ICs). The structure of being an IC has changed through the years, becoming increasingly less independent. In the past, a majority of wood was sold based on stumpage. An IC would contract with a landowner to cut a certain amount of wood, and the IC would pay the landowner for that wood based on the current price per board foot. The IC would then sell the wood the mill offering the best price. Now, most people have moved away from that to contract logging service agreements. Under these agreements, land managers or landowners market their wood directly to the mill and then hire a contractor who has all the trucks and equipment. They pay the contractor a certain amount per ton or board foot to harvest it and process it and truck it, and pay to build roads.

It would appear that these changes are not to the benefit of the truckers and loggers. According to a Maine DOL study, in the past 25 years, while the large forest landowners' profits (adjusted for inflation) have increased by 169%, Maine loggers have witnessed a decline of 32% in wages. The report did not cite the change in wages for truckers, but due to the fact that both loggers and truckers are IC's for forest landowners, the change is likely quite similar. Truckers and loggers do benefit from the newer structure in that, when prices drop at the mill, they are still usually paid a set price. However, they are hurt by the fact that they are no able to search out wood they can buy for the best price and search for a mill that they can sell to for the best profit. While there is very little truly independent about the newer IC structure, truckers are not considered employees, so they do not receive any of the benefits that one might gain from being an employee. When their costs increase due to changes like the cost of fuel or increased distance they need to travel due to posted roads, they are receive no more per cord for their extra costs. While they are working anywhere from 50-70 hours a week they don't see any overtime pay, and they don't receive benefits such as workers comp, unemployment benefits, or insurance. Many truckers are also only getting paid twice a month, instead of weekly, and in order to pay for gas to make the trips from day to day, they are racking up credit card debt paying for it.

Another structure hurting independent contractors is what that same DOL study has deemed an oligopsony. An oligopsony is a market with a very small number of buyers. In such a market, the buyer is able to set the price low, since they have little competition to prevent them from doing otherwise. In Northern Maine there are only two major land-owners, Seven Islands and Irving. Irving is the state's largest landowner, and owns both the land and many of the mills the wood is being sold to. This control of the market on both the landowner and mill sides has driven down the price per cord that truckers are receiving for wood.

Bill Jarvis is a forester and works as a contractor. "I had a friend who worked as a mill buyer, and I asked him, 'Why is it we can never get more money?' He said, 'Every year the insurance goes up. Every year the union contracting employees require us to pay them more. We have to pay more for health insurance, we have to pay more for electricity.' He said 'The one and only cost that we can control is what we pay for the wood we're buying.' He said his hands are tied on absolutely everything else. And the way the world market is now, with so many countries overseas particularly able to produce paper and whatever, and even ship it overseas and sell it for less than what they can even get it out the door here, he said, 'We have to control whatever price we can to stay in business.'

And they do that by how much they pay for the wood. And the landowners don't want less money for the wood that they're selling. The contractors don't want less money for the wood that they're harvesting. The truckers don't want less money for the wood they're trucking, but somebody has to lose somewhere. And, through the years, it tends to be the truckers." Again it is the truckers and the loggers, both groups who work as independent contractors, who have been increasingly hurt - basically by being the one major non-set, controllable cost in the forest products market.

**The Canadian Effects**

Maine's logging truck industry has the added burden of consisting largely of cross-national-border transportation. The majority of mills that process Maine lumber are not far away, but still across the border, in Canada. While Canadian truckers cannot, in most cases, transport logs from one point within the US to another point in the US, they can transport wood from Canada to the US and vice versa. Cross-border Canadian truckers effectively make more money for hauling the same loads as American truckers since they are paid in American dollars, receive universal health care, and in many cases receive equipment subsidies and government aid.

Canadian weight regulations also effect the American market, since Canadian regulations allow trucks to

weigh up to 137,700 pounds on some Canadian roads. While they are not currently allowed to carry that amount in the US, there is presently a bill being considered, "An Act To Adopt Canadian Highway Weight Standards," that would allow trucks to be operated with a gross vehicle weight of 137,700 pounds on a five mile section of Route 1 from Calais to Baileyville. According to the bill's sponsor, Representative John Morrison of Baileyville, the town recently bought a section of land and installed a sewer, where it hopes to be able to construct a trans-load facility.

The hope is that Canadian trucks will utilize this facility by transporting full Canadian loads, which are not legal on US roads, to this facility to drop off. Then, American trucks would pick up the logs, and transport them at legal American road weights to their intended buyer. Currently, many Canadian truckers drive straight from Canada to markets in Massachusetts and New York, transporting logs at (ideally) legal American weights. Representative Morrison hopes that Canadian truckers will see it as an economic benefit to be able to haul a greater amount of logs a shorter distance, and that American truckers will gain jobs by transporting the loads from the trans-load facility to other American markets. There is some fear that this will set a precedent in allowing Canadian weight rules on American roads, and create a slippery slope where the allowable weights continue to increase. Morrison argues that this shouldn't be a problem if each proposal is weighed on its economic cost & benefit. The state estimates that allowing the increased Canadian weights in this section of road will cost an extra \$3 million in road maintenance, and may require a new bridge to be built in Calais. Morrison believes that the extra jobs for American truckers and workers at the trans-load facility will outweigh that. Others have expressed concern that this bill would serve to allow Canadian truckers to haul greater weights than American truckers to the Canadian-owned Domtar paper mill that is 1/2 mile off this route. Morrison replies that this has not really been a consideration in putting forth this bill, and that the focus of it is to provide incentive for building the proposed trans-load facility.

As a result of Canadian weight regulations, even without the question of Canadian truck weights being allowed in parts of Maine, some buyers set their price paid to American truckers based on what Canadian truckers are earning. According to Troy Jackson, when one of the foremen for an Irving mill in St. Leonard, New Brunswick (directly across the river from Van Buren, Maine) was asked by an American trucker, "What are you basing the rate on?" he said "We base it on a 42 ton payload [meaning the gross weight of the truck would have to be between 110-118,000 pounds.] In other words, the amount that American truckers are getting paid is based on weights which are legal in

Canada, but illegal in the US.

**NAFTA**

As of today, there are no NAFTA corridors between the US and Canada. The term "NAFTA Corridor," while it carries no official meaning, is used in reference to roads viewed as critical links to expanding trade with Canada and Mexico, and on which, international standards would be in effect. The bill to adopt Canadian Highway Weight Standards could conceivably in effect create a mini-NAFTA corridor, and possibly set a precedent for doing so. Canadian forest products industry officials have been strong advocates of higher weights on interstates in Maine and the creation of an east-west highway, with Canadian weight allowances, that would cut across Maine, in order to connect the Maritimes with Quebec. These changes would do little, however, to address the disparities between the system that Canadian truckers are able to operate under, and the one that Americans must operate under. The government and industry officials pushing to "harmonize" trade rules between countries under NAFTA are simply looking to increase the ability of industries in those countries to operate with the least regulations possible. They are not looking to harmonize the social systems between countries, such as placing US and Canadian workers under the same health care or subsidy systems. Unless such a wide-reaching "harmonization" were created, all the new roads and lifting regulations wouldn't do a thing to eliminate the disparity between the Canadian and American truckers.

**What the Future Holds**

"These guys, they aren't going to be able to afford some of these fines. They get hit, they're out of business. They get hit two or three times, then they're done. And their mind thinks, well, I've been hit, now I gotta run overloaded to pay for that. And if they get nailed again, then they're done." explained Jack Gilboe, of Jackman, discussing the effects of the increased fines on small trucking companies. Larger trucking companies have a much greater chance of staying in business, since they are usually diversified. They also have the advantage in that they are able to afford newer trailers, some of which are as much as 10,000 pounds lighter than older trailers, which allow them to haul an extra 10,000 pounds of logs instead.

The opinions on what should be done about these problems -- both those that lead to the overloading and those that result from it -- are many. Suggestions for changing the structure of the fines have included the idea that fines be applied in a "three strikes and your out" fashion or on a points system, so as to only target repeat violators. In order to effectively enforce weights, and be sure



**TRUCKS : CONTINUED FROM PG. 10**

that the assessed weights are correct, some have called for permanent weigh stations in areas heavily traveled by logging trucks. Others are calling for a repeal of the axle-weight fines, which most agree are the most difficult weights for a trucker to ensure are correct.

Frank DuBoise of Jackman explained what he feels will be the eventual effects, if the fine structure stays as it is, "I understand that if they stay with the legal load, then they're going to starve to death. And they'll lose their trucks and their homes ... I had a tenant across the street. He was in the same situation, he was driving a truck, he worked what, 50, 60 hours in one week, made \$258. You know where he is now? He's in Massachusetts. Getting paid \$25 an hour for driving heavy equipment. He couldn't make a living up here. But he went down there, moved his family down there, and hey, he's getting paid a decent wage. But he had to move to do it ... And then they're going to hire all Canadian drivers, and sooner or later they'll get tired of paying several thousand dollar fines, and they'll start working with legal loads too. And I guess maybe that may be the answer, I don't know. And I know it's hard from some people who've been driving trucks all their lives to just pick up and relocate because they can't make a living, but,

it's been done before, it just depends on how desperate you get."

For those truckers who don't want to give up quite yet and relocate their families to Massachusetts, for those who love working in the woods and on the road too much to leave, there are some more wide-reaching changes that could possibly be implemented, in addition to the more specific previously described changes. Several options are being proposed that would work to change the way that the state looks at who is responsible for preventing overloading, and to change some of current structure of the logging and logging truck businesses.

Troy Jackson is working on a piece of legislation that would make weight violations up to 110,000 pounds the trucker's responsibility. Anything over that would be the landowner's responsibility. He hopes that this would force landowners to have someone watch the loads leaving their land to make sure the loads are not grossly overweight. As a result, he explains "landowners would have to pay the trucks a decent rate, and not only that, the landowners would be policing the guys that are hauling too much because they'd be more apt to have to pay that big fine."

There was also a report released in January by the DOT examining a similar proposal, with suggested legislation, to hold commercial shippers

responsible for gross weight violations. This is based on a weight violation program that exists in Minnesota. Under this sort of program, the owner or broker of the property being shipped must keep a written record of the weight of the property being shipped, and the registration of the vehicle shipping it. This structure works more easily when the goods being shipped are from more fixed structures such as grain elevators and gravel pits, where a weigh station is in place -- it would take more work for it to be used for transporting logs, but with portable scales and an employee in charge of keeping the records, it could be made possible.

Currently there is also a bill before the House to clarify Independent Contractor status, so as to more clearly define the structure of IC rules, and theoretically, make the rules more beneficial to the independent contractors so that they might either gain employee benefits and/or somehow regain more independence.

By changing structures of the forest products market, IC loggers and truckers could shift their vulnerable economic position. While they are currently the controllable cost that gets cut whenever land and mill owners want to cut costs, they could move to a position to where they would have some control in setting the price to what they need to be paid in order to stay in business. These

changes could be a first step for truckers and loggers wanting to regain control. If truckers and loggers were able to connect and organize, they could again gain more bargaining power. There are no logging truck operators in Maine who are members of Teamsters or any other trucking unions - it has historically not been a profession with labor organizing. IC's might even benefit from connecting with small landowners who are not able to sell their wood for as good a price due to market control by large landowners.

These coalitions have been attempted to some extent in northern Maine, to varying degrees of success. Many are afraid to ask for too much or organize too much, for fear that they will just be replaced with Canadian workers. However, work on changing labor laws and building coalitions with Canadian laborers might help to address that fear. It certainly will help more than allowing things to stay just as they are, allowing decisions to be made almost solely by the large landowners and legislators. If that continues, there's little chance that small trucking companies will become anything more than another disappearing small businesses in Maine.

*By Hillary Lister. Due to space constraints of the paper, this article was significantly edited. For uncut text, please visit:*

[www.mainecommons.org/overflow.htm](http://www.mainecommons.org/overflow.htm)



## THE NEW CHAUTAUQUA Countercoup Times

"The American press, with very few exceptions, a kept press. Kept by the big corporations the way a whore is kept by a tycoon." - Theodore Dreiser, *An American Tragedy*



CCT is in pupal phase this issue.  
Stay tuned for a metamorphosis.

### Editorial

#### Opening Eyes to the Corporate Coup

We're getting lots of queries now about *coup d'états*, and the real meaning of *countercoup* "on the ground" Try out these answers. Webster's first: *coup d'état* - an often swift, always illegitimate takeover of government by a militant-minded authoritarian gang, (in our case, the Fortune 2000 led by mind-vending media pushers, dinosaur fuel touts, and discount sweatshopers). *Countercoup* - a popular uprising to reject an illegitimate government that took power in a coup d'état.

*Coup* as we use it rarely refers to Dubya's illicit occupation of the Oval Office (though we pray that is never forgotten); we chiefly mean the earlier corporate buyout of both our major parties and the resulting theft of our sovereign control. In other words, this is less about the sudden capture of a room, than the solidified seizure of all our ruling bodies and elites. In a representative democracy when your reps are all beholden to a crowd of corporate bodies, we the people are ~~shit~~ shut out of luck and our centers of power. We believe this has indeed occurred.

And we are not alone:

"In the last twenty years, the top US corporations have achieved a literal coup d'état and they now control almost every lever of official power." - Ralph Nader

"The verdict is in: transnationals have pulled off nothing short of a corporate coup d'état, ushering in what David Korten calls 'the era of Corporate Rule.' In this context, a growing consensus is emerging among progressive intellectuals and activists in the North which holds that if citizens are to have any input into their communal futures, they must deal directly with the real power brokers -- no longer just the politicians but the people pulling their strings: the transnational corporations themselves." - Naomi Klein

"Our Maine problem is simple: the big corporations bought our government, and we can't afford to buy it back." - Hilton Hafford

Look around: Truth is out there.

**SEE, HEAR,  
WHISTLEBLOW  
NO EVIL**



**THE  
HEADS UP  
BUILDING  
BLOCK OF  
CORPORATE  
POWER**

#### More Morbid Symptoms

##### LEADING THE DEMOCRATIC CORPSE

*Wanted: Signs of Life on the Left  
by Publicus, www.tompaine.com*

Recall ex-Labor Secretary Robert Reich's 3/11op-ed piece in The Washington Post, "The Democrats Aren't *Just Resting*." He wrote:

*"If the Democratic Party's alive, why doesn't it insist that the budget surplus be spent on health care for the 44 million Americans without it? And child care for the millions who lack it? And good schools for all kids? Why doesn't the party say it's plain absurd to spend \$300 billion on the military when the Cold War is over, and tens of billions more on a missile-defense shield that won't work? Why isn't it outraged that most of the benefits of President Bush's tax cut will go to people at the top? Why does it play dead on the environment? Because it's not playing dead. It is dead!"*

Now think of what's happened since 9/11 in Congress: Missile defense is still a crazy idea and a terrific waste of money, but now the Democrats have dropped their previously feeble opposition to it. Military spending is going through the roof without any long-range planning or justification for the costs (no one has yet to explain why we still need to spend more than the next ten countries combined, especially if the new enemy is transnational networks of individuals, not whole countries). Social issues, health care, education, childcare -- forget it, no one wants to talk about them. It's getting near impossible to tell a Democrat from a Republican -- at least without taking a pulse (GOPers have one).

**RICHLY RECOMMENDED RECON**  
to understand or abet the Insurrection

Stupid White Men by Michael Moore  
Truly dire satire (at bookstores now!)  
Trading Democracy by Bill Moyers  
NAFTA vs. all our basic rights (pbs.org)  
Life & Debt - see how the IMF crushes 3rd World economies (lifeanddebt.org)  
[www.emperors-clothes.com](http://www.emperors-clothes.com) - 9/11 lies corporate media won't/can't expose  
[www.countercoup.net](http://www.countercoup.net) (from 4/1/02)  
Online home of Countercoup Maine



# Maine Solidarity Calendar

March 5 - April 20, 2002 (updated and with more info at <http://calendar.maineindymedia.org>)

## FEBRUARY 25 - MAY 1ST

### **Women's History Celebration 2002**

Phone: 581-1228  
Web: [www.umaine.edu/wic](http://www.umaine.edu/wic)  
Location: UMaine, Orono & Peace and Justice Center, Bangor  
Information: The theme is "Women's History from Diverse Perspectives." Call or visit the website for a full listing of events.

## TUESDAY MARCH 5TH

### **Lobby Day**

Contact: Natural Resources Council  
Phone: 800-287-2345 x211  
Web: [www.maineenvironment.org](http://www.maineenvironment.org)  
Location: NRCM Offices, Augusta  
Information: How-to's, talking with legislators.

## WEDNESDAY MARCH 6TH

### **"Dreams & Realities of Franco-America"**

Phone: 780-4289  
Location: Lewiston Auburn College, Lewiston  
Information: Presentations, lunch & dinner plus entertainment, music, & dancing.

## THURSDAY MARCH 7TH

### **MSEA/SEIU Emergency Forums On Health Care Coverage**

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM  
Contact: Mary Anne Turowski  
Phone: 1-800-452-8794 ext 133  
Location: Waterville  
Information: One in a series of public forums across the state to hear people's concerns about health care. People can join together to tell Maine politicians they need to ACT NOW to cover all Mainers.

## FRIDAY MARCH 8TH

### **Multicultural Evening**

Phone: 772-0680  
Location: Woodbury Student Center  
University of Southern Maine, Portland  
Information: Multicultural evening w/dinner & entertainment by Sudanese, Congolese, & Cambodian performers.

### **Global Women's Strike**

Phone: 215-848-1120  
Email: [philly@crossroadswomen.net](mailto:philly@crossroadswomen.net)  
Web: [womenstrike8m.server101.com](http://womenstrike8m.server101.com)  
Location: International  
Information: Call for women worldwide to take action to demand "Invest in Caring, Not Killing". Coordinated by Wages for Housework Campaign.

## SATURDAY MARCH 9TH

### **Maine Jewish Film Festival**

Phone: 879-5776  
Email: [filmfest@mjff.org](mailto:filmfest@mjff.org)  
Web: <http://www.mjff.org>  
Location: Several Locations, Portland  
Information: Continues until Thursday, March 14

### **MSEA/SEIU Emergency Forums On Health Care Coverage**

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM  
Location: Poulin Room, University of Maine, Presque Isle  
Information & Contacts: See March 7th listing.

### **MSEA/SEIU Emergency Forums On Health Care Coverage**

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM  
Location: Madawaska  
Information & Contacts: See March 7th listing.

## MONDAY MARCH 11TH

### **"Nonviolent Communication"**

Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Contact: Cathy Gilmer  
Phone: 342-4700  
Email: [pneumatoad@acadia.net](mailto:pneumatoad@acadia.net)  
Location: Free Library, Belfast  
Information: Free Workshop

### **MSEA/SEIU Emergency Forums On Health Care Coverage**

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM  
Location: Auburn Middle School, Auburn  
Information & Contacts: See March 7th listing..

## TUESDAY MARCH 12TH

### **"Portland Immigrants, Before & After" Art Exhibit**

Contact: USM Women's Studies Program  
Phone: 780-4289  
Location: The Area Gallery, Portland  
Information: Continues to Sunday, April 7

### **Presentations on New Organic Standards**

Time: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Contact: MOFGA  
Phone: 568-4142  
Email: [mofga@mofga.org](mailto:mofga@mofga.org)  
Web: <http://www.mofga.org>  
Location: York County Extension, Sanford  
Information: Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association will host a series of public presentations to explain new National Organic Certification Standards.

### **MSEA/SEIU Emergency Forums On Health Care Coverage**

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM  
Location: Sanford  
Information & Contacts: See March 7th listing.

## THURSDAY MARCH 14TH

### **Presentation on New Organic Standards**

Time: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Location: Highmoor Farm Experiment Station, Route 202, Monmouth  
Information & Contacts: See March 12th listing.

## SATURDAY MARCH 16TH

### **Hardy Girls Film, "Tough Guise"**

Time: 10:00 AM  
Phone: 861-8131  
Location: Railroad Square, Waterville  
Information: Films and discussions on raising healthy girls and boys, sponsored in by Hardy Girls Healthy Women. Free and open to interested members of the public, regardless of gender or age. Sessions are age-appropriate for junior high and older. "Tough Guise," focuses on images of masculinity in popular culture.

## MONDAY MARCH 18TH

### **"Nonviolent Communication"**

Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Contact: Cathy Gilmer  
Phone: 342-4700  
Email: [pneumatoad@acadia.net](mailto:pneumatoad@acadia.net)  
Location: Free Library, Belfast  
Information: Free Workshop

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

### **Presentation on New Organic Standards**

Time: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Location: MOFGA Site, Unity  
Information & Contacts: See March 12th listing.

### **"Paying the Price: Killing the Children of Iraq" video**

Time: 6:30 PM  
Contact: Susan  
Phone: 338-0406  
Location: Free Library, Belfast  
Information: "Paying the Price: Killing the Children of Iraq" video & discussion.

### **Wildlife Forum**

Time: 7:00 PM  
Contact: Steve Bien  
Phone: 897-5215  
Location: Thomas Auditorium, UMaine, Farmington  
Information: Sponsored by the National

Wildlife Federation & Maine Audubon. State legislators will come to hear the concerns, wants & needs of the nonconsumptive wildlife community in Maine - that's folks who just enjoy observing wildlife but don't hunt or fish. First forum in a series.

## THURSDAY MARCH 21ST

### **"Building Sustainable Organizations"**

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM  
Contact: Cyndie Beneski  
Phone: 800-287-2345 x211  
Email: [cbeneski@nrcm.org](mailto:cbeneski@nrcm.org)  
Web: <http://www.maineenvironment.org>  
Location: 11 King St, Augusta  
Information: Workshop sponsored by Natural Resources Council of Maine.

## FRIDAY MARCH 22ND

### **Children from the Shadows**

Contact: Laura  
Email: [billybraggs@juno.com](mailto:billybraggs@juno.com)  
Web: <http://www.ourtruecolors.org>  
Location: University of Hartford, Hartford, CT  
Information: A summit working to improve & enriching the lives of LGBTQ youth, adults, & families. Central Maine Outright will help get registrations together for Central Maine youth, advisor Laura will be coordinating. RSVP ASAP if interested in attending.

### **FTAA Hearings**

Contact: Amy Fairchild  
Phone: 947-4203  
Email: [bjorn@pica.ws](mailto:bjorn@pica.ws)  
Location: UU Church, Park St, Bangor  
Information: Public hearings on the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Sponsored by Alliance for Responsible Trade. Held throughout New England from March 20-30.

## SATURDAY MARCH 23RD

### **Hardy Girls Film, "Pack of Lies"**

Time: 10:00 AM  
Phone: 861-8131  
Location: Railroad Square, Waterville  
Information: See March 16th description. "Pack of Lies" discusses lung cancer & the tobacco industry.

### **Conference On Organic Agriculture & Rural Living**

Phone: 568-4142  
Email: [mofga@mofga.org](mailto:mofga@mofga.org)  
Web: <http://www.mofga.org>  
Location: MOFGA Fairgrounds, Unity  
Information: Conference on Organic agriculture & rural living (23rd) Scion Exchange, Seed Savers Exchange (24th).

# Wormtown

by J.C. Page - Part 1 of a Serial Novel

## Prologue

What is it? Monday? What does that make it? July 2? Just found out my mother is still alive. Though, she won't or can't talk to me yet. My first instinct is to call the police, but I know I shouldn't. It wouldn't matter anyways because I don't know where she is. I just have to write everything down so I can deal with it. I don't know how much time I have.

Actually, it was his idea to write it down. Said it might help me keep the whole thing straight.

But don't you have to have the story straight before you can write it down? Okay, I'll put down what I don't know like what about this Doctor Lazarus guy?

Basically, what he told me comes down to this. You got people with normal above ground lives who also have secret identities under ground. These underground people come up when no one's looking and mess with the works. He says he's a regular guy. Lazarus isn't his real name. Owns his own business. Pays taxes and so forth, but he's got this group of people like janitors and bus drivers and so forth, he calls them cousins, and when something wrong happens, when the laws and stuff backfire, they step in somehow. He calls it human intervention.

That's what happened when Mom disappeared. One of the cousins found out she was in the Psych ward of City Hospital. I said not again. He said not anymore. She was there, but Doctor Lazarus and his fucking all-stars got her out and now they got her up on the seashore and he says she's painting up a storm.

Of course I'm going to believe that. It gets even more believable. The folks who kept her needle-drunk were some sort of out of control security agency called the NIB. Not quite cops, but a little more authority than you or me. And their total existence is a near perfect secret. They know that Mom knows and they can't have that.



They bury anything they want.

This is why Mom sent me to hide out at Auntie Alice's. And until she disappeared, things she was saying, I thought she'd finally completely scrambled her hard drive.

Now I know her whole life has been connected to something that almost nobody could understand because it is so strange. I don't understand it. But for the first time in all my thirteen years, I believe it. Now that I believe it, I have to know it all.

What about this Lazarus guy? The famous underground operator. Nobody knows his true identity. How do I know the guy I talked to is really Lazarus? Most people say he's a mobster.

He says he's made enemies who want to flush him out into the open with loud lies. I never gave the whole thing a thought, but I know one thing now, he did save my mother. And I'm not just taking his word for it.

I have a note in my hand that says: I love you K. That's how I know.

Mind is jumping all around. Want to bounce this PEN-----

...

Right.

I asked Lazarus if he'd read the note. He goes, no it's not addressed to him. If it hadn't been for his freaky face, he was flat as milk, really, I would have said he was telling me a nut-tickler.

The note also says: I am fine. Hope you are. See you soon.

It was the exact language of her three word sentences that is my mother's signature on four million or more kitchen table notes. I am mothered via notes on the kitchen table. Take out trash. Reheat tuna casserole. Twenty-five minutes medium-high. Do your homework.

So I know it's true. Now I need to know it all.

## Volume 1

### I Am God

2:45 P.M. July 3

"I couldn't really tell what anything was," Father Phil said. "It looks completely different from up there." His navy blue sedan ambled down the hill away from the glittering airport. "But it's amazing," he went on. "Worcester's one of the biggest city's in New England but there was nothing to see from my window but green hills and blue lakes. I could see some highways. The glass tower downtown. But all around the direction I was facing, mostly just green and blue. Ooo! To be so far above the ground. Amazing."

"You're talking in circles." Jeremiah spoke while rolling a marijuana cigarette on his knee. "Settle down. You always want your feet on the ground and your head in the clouds."

"Thanks for coming to get me," Father Phil said, dipping his chin. "I really mean it. You know what else I saw? And everyone could see it. The ol' dragon balloon on Greeny's roof. I tell ya they should put a shuttle bus right at the gate. All those doctors flying in. Shuttle 'em right down to the Dragon. You could've picked me up there. Hey, really, thanks for getting me." He backhanded the side of Jeremiah's leg.

Several tiny leaf-fingers cascaded from their denim perch to the littered abyss of the car floor.

"Easy does it," Jeremiah said, putting a palm out and saving a few stragglers. "It's no problem. You buy the first one, all right?"

J.C. PAGE

WORMTOWN (PART 1)

PAGE 2

A row of red lights and melting tires stretched out ahead.

"This is why you never take Park Ave.," Father Phil reminded himself as he scratched the rim of his retreating hair. Sweeping the porch he called it. "This time of the afternoon in the summer? No excuse for this congestion," he said, squeezing the wheel.

Jeremiah tucked the joint into the corner of his mouth and searched his pocket for a lighter.

"Sure is good to be home, though," Father Phil went on. "Sorry you had to wait. The flight was delayed for an unknown reason."

"I read the paper and drank my coffee," Jeremiah conducted his voice with the wand in the corner of his mouth. "It was air conditioned in there. Beat sitting around my sweatbox till the pubs open." He extracted a bright pink disposable lighter from the bottom of his hip pocket.

"She treachya right?" Father Phil asked, now tapping the wheel with ringless fingers.

"Check the O." Jeremiah pointed at it. "Only twenty miles on it. Back and forth to the pub, thirty-nine times and one trip for the Doctor," he said.

"Why the doctor?"

"He misses me."

Jeremiah felt eyes on him as soon as he lit the paper wand. He puffed it with fish-lips as he scanned his perimeter. In the right turn lane, his glance fell on a posh truck. Through a glimmering reflection of a used car lot on the driver's window, Jeremiah made out a man's profile squeezed from a drum-tight necktie and stuck to a palm phone.

"Ali and the kids are up in Portsmouth now," the driver said. "They're good. They're shopping. I gotta crank this thing out. I should be up by Sunday." The driver locked eyes with Jeremiah. "I wish you could see the insect in the tin can next to me," the driver said, extending the middle finger of his phone hand.

"You should see this guy," Jeremiah said while holding in his hit. "Oophf," his lungs exhausted. He handed the joint to Father Phil.

"Keep that down," Father Phil said as he accepted the

offer.

"Hey if that guy has a right to be on the road in that thing," Jeremiah said, turning back to look where the truck had turned. "I have a right to smoke pot," he declared. "That's that."

A familiar silence settled over them as they gazed forward along the avenue. On the near horizon, a parade-balloon the likeness of a chubby dragon poked above storefronts and light poles marking their destination with a cartoon smile.

Ernesto Valdez and Donovan Dimato sat at a table in the corner of the dining room.

"The problem with taking out Saddam Hussein is that there are too many other assholes to take his spot," Ernesto said, fanning a beer list in front of his face to clear Donovan's smoke.

"It would be inconsistent if we killed assholes in foreign countries, when there are so many assholes right here," Donovan said from behind the shelter of a blank baseball cap. He swooped his pack of butts into his shirt pocket and exhaled from the side of his mouth. "Killing is not the way to go. We need something friendlier."

Sterling, the waiter, arrived carrying order pad and pen and wearing an emerald green polo shirt. A patch on the shirt-breast depicted a chubby dragon drooling over a pile of red ribs.

"We've just been shooting the shit. You know how it is," Ernesto explained.

"Yeah, that's great, fellas," Sterling said. Turning on his heel, slapping the order pad with the pen, he cocked his head sideways and rolled his eyes to the ceiling.

"Hey, I'll take another brew," Donovan said.

"And you sir? Would you care for another brew?"

"Yeah, man," Ernesto said.

"Two brews," Sterling noted, then went to the men's room.

After blowing his nose, washing his hands and face, running the hand dryer three times and checking his neat grey hair, he went to the computer terminal and ordered their beer.

"Cock spankers," he said as he stood at the service bar tapping the brass rail and re-

checking his look in the bar mirror.

Bethany held a pint glass at a forty-five degree angle to the Paul Revere's Lager tap. "Wha," she asked Sterling.

"Ah, jees. Just a coupla punks had me for Geometry. Shoulda frisked 'em for cheat sheets. Really, the opportunities were there when I had 'em where I could ..." With both hands, Sterling strangled the air in front of him.

Bethany raised one blond eyebrow bringing out a rustic heartiness in her egg shell eyes.

"Hey, Betty, whadya gotta do to get a drink aroun' 'ere? Chrisakes, a man could die a tizr." Bob Thibedeau spittled the air as he complained from his stool.

"Listen Charlie," Bethany cautioned him.

"Whooda hell is Chaaa-lie?" Bob blurted, and then croaked so strongly it managed an echo under the low ceiling. His tie swung loosely and his face boiled. His eyeballs fish-tailed behind large plastic lenses.

"Are you having another cardiac?" Bethany asked as she delivered his bourbon Manhattan with a cherry, rocks on the side and took away his empty glasses in one gesture.

The Mayor came into the room through the back door and sat two stools from Bob on the short side of the bar. He pulled on the tip of a blue baseball cap stitched with a gold 'W' on the façade.

Bob nodded and burped quietly into the back of his hand. Bethany retreated to the kitchen. A grey mouse sniffed a peanut shell under Bob's stool. Central air conditioning hummed over the pipe music:

*We're having a hard time deciding  
If there is anything to do  
my friend asked me  
And I said I was about to ask you  
Then he said what do you think  
Is it time for a drink  
Is it time to break for lunch  
Is there time for it all  
I said I'm thinking too much  
And trying not to think at all*

Sterling hummed along as he placed the beers on fresh drink napkins. He took Donovan's empty glass. Then he contemplated for a moment the

quarter inch of suds in the bottom of Ernesto's glass. "Mmmm-mm-mm," he hummed as he turned away, thinking: a lad needs to empty his glass.

A chirping came from somewhere on Donovan's person. As he reached to his hip like a cowboy going for his six-shooter, the chirping stopped, and he said: "Hey, Stephen, we'll take one of those jalapeno poppers to start."

"Okay, that must have been a slip of the tongue," Sterling said taking another step away. "I forgive you."

"And a new ashtray, por favor," Ernesto threw in.

Sterling snarled like a lap dog and continued walking away.

After entering the order in the computer terminal by pounding his fingers against the touch-screen, he waved a hand in front of his face. Sunshine broke through the clouds of his complexion. He shuffled to the tune and hip-checked the kitchen door causing it to yawn as he stepped through. He stopped. He palmed his forehead. "Mind-blank," he said.

"What are you doing?" Bethany asked as she dunked a roll into a cup of salad dressing.

"I don't know. Mindblank. I think I'm looking for something, but I don't remember what." He walked to the other side of the kitchen peering among the shelves. He looked over at Bethany and saw that she was speaking to him. Through the churning hood fans and refrigerator motors, he couldn't hear a word. He walked back to her. "What are you saying?"

"What was it you called them? Cock spankers? Why would you call them that?"

Behind the line, two cooks made crocodile eyes through the space between a heat lamp and a stainless steel shelf.

Bud, the fry cook, wore headphones over his stained baseball cap. He murmured the words that shrieked in his ears. "Hack it off, hack it off, hack it off."

Lawrence, the grill cook, twirled his tongue around in his thin cheek. "Hear that potty-talk?" He elbowed Bud.

"Yes, it was cock spankers," Sterling said to Bethany.

J.C. PAGE

WORMTOWN (PART 1)

PAGE 3

"Do you know what that is?"

"She knowth," Lawrence threw out from behind the line.

Sterling continued: "Most of my former students come in here and I make them feel cheap with a happy pop quiz. Oh, it's embarrassing. By the time the ordeal is over, they're repaying me for all the years of trouble."

"Oh, yeah, big tips?" Bethany wanted to know.

"Yuuge tips," Sterling nodded. "But these two cock spankers, Prince America and his sidekick, they play tough and tight."

Bethany aimed her next words behind the line: "Hey, why don't you mind your own beeswax back there? Didn't your mother ever tell you it isn't polite to eavesdrop?"

Lawrence pushed his finger into his ear and spun his head halfway around. "I don't think you're getting through," he said.

Bethany frowned and dunked her roll.

"Ashtray!" Sterling remembered when he saw the stack above the dish machine.

As he dumped butts into a bucket at the service bar, Sterling saw the Mayor and asked: "Does Bethany know you're here?"

The Mayor raised his shoulders.

"Hold on a second." Sterling walked to the kitchen. "Bethany," he said holding the door open with his foot. "You got a customer. Get out here." Then he returned to the bar and stood next the Mayor. They both faced the TV. A dirt bike race roared across the screen.

"Beowulf is ready," Sterling said.

"Old Man's war room," the Mayor nodded.

Bob scratched his Adam's Apple.

Bethany returned to the bar and filled a tall glass with ice, Bloody Mary mix and club soda. She placed it in front of the Mayor with too much emphasis causing a portion of the red drink to spray onto Sterling's shirt. The Mayor was, of course, unscathed. Semi-cylinders of ice ricocheted off the bar and skated across the floorboards.

"I'll catchya latah," Sterling said as he made for the kit-

chen.

Bethany wore two shades of natural blush. "I'm sorry, Sterling," she said. Then, to the Mayor: "I really wish you wouldn't come in here."

The Mayor sipped his drink.

Bethany's gaze tripped over the rim of his glass and fell into the shadow under his cap where distant fire called her away. She shook off his trance and wiped the bar clean.

"We got a meeting with the Kid," Donovan said when he got back from the payphone.

"Cool," Ernesto said. "You know, I was thinking while you were gone, when we inherit power, we should print dollars on hemp paper, hah?"

"Excuse me gentlemen," Sterling interjected. "I see that your menus are closed and your beverages need refilling, again."

Donovan asked: "What kind of cheese do you have?"

"I'm so glad you asked," Sterling said. "We have white American, yellow American and Swiss."

"You don't have cheese spread?" Ernesto asked.

"Apparently, you're all done drinking."

"No," Donovan's scowl hardened. "We'll have another."

"Cheese to go with that?" Sterling tapped his pen on his pad.

"Put it on a burger," Ernesto said, and then his mouth twisted into a sideways ess to say: "Atshitsh good."

"Like 'em bloody?" Sterling assumed.

"In the middle," Donovan said.

"In a middla medium rare en medium," Ernesto said and made a gesture with his hand like he was reaching under bed covers.

Sterling pounded the order into the computer. He had to call Bethany out of the kitchen to get the beer.

She placed two copper Paul Revere lagers on the service bar. Whipped foam stripped a few tears from the dewy glasses. Sterling hoisted a beer in each hand extending each pinkie-finger for balance and went directly to the kitchen.

Bethany followed him. Standing just inside the door, she watched as he admired for a

moment one of the pints, then closed his eyes and swallowed a mouthful. He did the same and with as much love for the other pint. Each glass leveled out about a half inch from the top.

"Daz gooot!" Sterling gasped and licked his lips. Water drew from his eyes.

"That is gross," Bethany said. "You are not going to serve that."

Sterling made his delivery, cleared the empties and said: "Gentlemen, burgers are coming right up."

When their waiter was out of earshot, Ernesto pointed to the glass in front of him. "Man, looks like he took a sip out there." He smiled to show he was kidding. Then he saw Father Phil and Jeremiah walk in and his smile vanished.

"See that?" Ernesto whispered at Donovan.

"It's the Saint Paul pub crawlers," Donovan said.

"I get creeped out when I see those guys here," Ernesto said.

"The legends live," Donovan lit a cigarette.

Father Phil mopped beads of sweat between banks of white hair. "I was at that game," he said to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah said: "An we won in something like fifteen innings," as they made their way to the bar.

"I remember the pitcher threw his glove at the umpire." Father Phil chuckled. They sat at the opposite end of the bar from the Mayor and Bob.

Sterling entered and pointed at the new arrivals. "Look who's come down to the watering hole," he said. "What's a matter? Sun too much for you out there? You look steamed."

"Who needs it?" Father Phil questioned. "Think I like skin cancer?"

"Watering hole," Jeremiah said. "I thought the sign said beer. C'mon, let's get outa here."

"Easy son, it's holy water, relax." Father Phil reassured.

"Know what causes skin cancer?" Sterling demanded. "Sun tan lotion, that's what. Let me see if I can find the fair Nymph of the bar to anoint you," he said and was off.

"Blasphemy," Father Phil nodded like he was agreeing with someone else's observation.

"Is that what you old

priests talk about up in Canada? Just where do you draw the line on blasphemy these days?" Jeremiah closed one eye and widened the other like he wanted to know but he was afraid of the answer.

"I don't draw any lines," Father Phil said. "I only perceive them."

Jeremiah focused both eyes on his friend. "That's like saying I didn't pull the trigger, my finger did."

"No it's not."

Bethany's anchor rope braid punched her back as she hurried to the bar and put napkins in front of her bickering customers.

"You're analogizing your own opinion, not mine," Father Phil continued.

Jeremiah abandoned his argument and ordered, "two stouts" before Bethany could ask.

"Better make mine a lager," Father Phil said.

"C'mon," Jeremiah said.

"I'm wilted," Father Phil justified. "Sitting in the car made me cottony."

"You need to rebuild your strength. Have something with some substance."

"I'll have something with spirit," Father Phil said.

Jeremiah held his hand open, fingers up, palm toward Father Phil.

Bethany delivered the lager to the priest.

"Do you have today's paper," Father Phil asked her.

"Somewhere," she said.

Jeremiah retrieved a pen from his hip pocket and began writing on his beverage napkin.

"What are you writing?" Father Phil wanted to know.

Jeremiah rapidly tapped his pen on the bar. He scratched the back of his neck. He scribbled another word on the paper and tucked it into his shirt pocket.

"I said what are you writing?" Father Phil said.

"My Last Will," Jeremiah said.

"What are you leaving for me?" Father Phil asked.

"My tab."

"You are a magnanimous fellow," Father Phil judged.

Bethany placed the stout in front of Jeremiah. All three of them watched the nitrogen bubbles cascade through the beer.

J.C. PAGE

WORMTOWN (PART 1)

PAGE 4

"Thank you," Jeremiah said, lifting his glass.

Bethany went to the office to search for the paper. Father Phil and Jeremiah clinked glasses.

"To independence," Father Phil said.

They drank.

Sterling now stood next to them. "You make that look enjoyable."

"Sit down," Jeremiah said. "The father'll buy you one."

"Actually, I just drank some beer in the kitchen. How was your trip?" He placed his hand on Father Phil's shoulder. "Jesus, does this place go to hell when you're on vacation!"

Father Phil subtly pulled himself away and said: "Montreal in July is a short way to go to get far away."

"I'm jealous," Sterling said. "This place is a morgue. I'm banging my head on a wall and playing scratch all day."

"All that traffic and no one stops in here?" Jeremiah shook his head in disbelief.

"Well, we get a push at mealtime. Everyone's stomach has the same clock. But this is our off-season. I'm really only here for the social life."

"I could see the dragon from the plane," Father Phil said. "You should have a shuttle right at the gate. Treat this place as the airport lounge, the welcome mat to the city."

"If I were running things," Sterling hypothesized. "I'd hire you as consultant."

Bethany returned with the paper for Father Phil. I ran your food to twenty-seven," she told Sterling with a hint of fluster in her voice and cheek.

"These punks take an hour to order, now they'll inhale their food and act like they've got a gang-bang to get to," Sterling said.

"There you are!" Bob blurted. "I was buggin' to think you din' work here anymore."

"Don't you think you've had enough?" Bethany asked through her upper lip as she poured his drink.

After sucking a drop of burger grease from his thumb, Ernesto lifted his chin at Donovan. "Hey, you got a coola?"

"I was just about to ask you." Donovan popped the last piece of sandwich into his mouth, and, as he chewed,

extracted cigarettes from his pocket. "We'll pick one up," he said, packing his cheek with cud.

"I have to pee," Ernesto said. On his way to the restroom, he pushed the number for work on his cell phone. Passing the bar, he glimpsed Sterling.

The waiter sneered at his customer. "I'm going to buy a boat and retire," Sterling said.

"I've got a hammock," Father Phil said. "Feels like I'm on a boat. I stretch out in front of my window, tie it from the door to the counter, get a light wind off the parking garage and I'm sailing."

"What time is the game tonight," Jeremiah asked.

"I don't know," Father Phil said, opening the paper.

"Back page," Jeremiah directed.

"Mm-hmm." Father Phil held the paper at arms' length. He put his finger on the page. "Fireworks in the park tonight," he said.

"Game starts at seven-thirty as always," Sterling provided. "Go to the columns." He nodded at the paper.

Father Phil tugged the bottom corner of the long crisp leaf, lifting it like a tissue from a box and dropping it open to the spot.

Sterling put his finger on a headline reading: "Lazarus investigation includes Wainright."

Father Phil placed his thumb on the byline. "D.H." he said. "That's Jerry's brother." He pointed his thumb at Jeremiah.

Sterling tapped the page and said: "Your brother's got it in for the infamous Doctor Lazarus. Does he have a death wish? That sleaze bag claims, Lazarus I'm saying, not your brother. That sleaze bag Lazarus claims he's got nothing to do with vandalism or violence. Claims he's a safety net for justice. He's a lunatic."

"He's the boogie man," Jeremiah said.

"What does Wainright have to do with Lazarus?" Father Phil asked.

"That's the best part," Sterling said. "An anonymous source in the PD told your brother that police have already linked Lazarus to the disappearance of Elinor Wainright. Yet a likely motive is undisclosed, and

the missing persons case hasn't even officially opened. And then and then your suicidal brother goes on to slam the City's finest for keeping secrets. He actually suggests, on the record, that they have their own undisclosed motive. Is your brother begging to get his balls clipped or what?"

"Never was afraid of the boogie man," Jeremiah said.

"Boogie men," Father Phil corrected. "There's a whole gang of 'em."

"Don't leave your homes at night," Jeremiah said, shuddering for dramatic impact. "Lazarus lurks in the shadows."

A toilet flushed deep in the men's room.

"Those punks are always suddenly in a hurry," Sterling said. "I better disappear." He dashed through a nearby door into the prep kitchen.

Ernesto came out of the men's room talking. "Thanks for understanding. I hope I'm back on my feet in a few days. I will. I will. Maybe something I ate. Thank you so much. Bye." He slid the phone into his pocket and walked past the bar entrance.

Bethany asked Jeremiah if he was ready for another stout. He was. She tried to avert her eyes from the Mayor as she poured, but his gravity pulled on her. "Please," she begged into her shoulder.

The Mayor nodded, slipped from his stool and exited through the back door.

Bethany cleared his glass of reddened ice.

Donovan stood by his table. "Did you get the check?" he asked Ernesto when he returned.

"Nah, man. He was busy. Hang on."

"How much was it, we gotta go, c'mon," Donovan said, walking away. Over his shoulder: "Leave it on the table. Let's roll."

"Alright, alright, I don't know. How much?" Ernesto left a twenty and five on his plate.

Bethany thought she'd steal another glimpse of Donovan, but seeing that he was gone, she entered the prep kitchen to snack on a cup of soup.

Bud stood by the double

sink, chopping onions, down-pouring tears, and singing about anger in a quiet voice.

Gabby, the dishwasher with baby-fat cheeks that misrepresented her distance from childhood, raised a sure hand out of a mixing bucket full of coleslaw and wagged a loaded finger, "no, no, no," in front of Sterling's face.

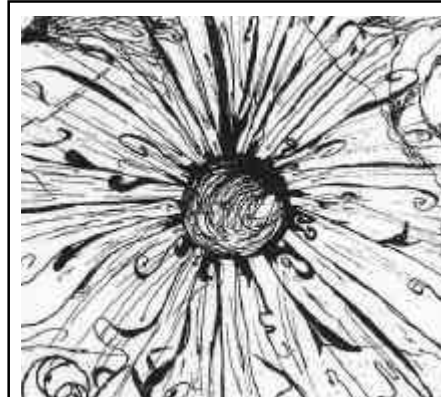
"Yes, yes, yes," Sterling said loud enough for a whole classroom. "Agua frio will freeze slower than agua caliente because agua frio has less surface contact. The hot water warms the shelf until the whole bottom molds to the ice on the shelf, forming a large area for temperature exchange. A cold glass just sits there high up on the tips of the ice crystals."

Gabby's innocent face saddened.

Sterling: "Get it?"

"Did twenty-seven leave?" Bethany asked. "Cause I'll go bus the table."

Sterling darted into the dining room, shaking his fist when he saw the money on the plate. Ketchup bearded Jefferson's face.



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# Maine Solidarity Calendar

(continued from page 12)

To have your event listed in the next issue of the Maine Commons as well as online, email the event info to: [editor@maineindymedia.org](mailto:editor@maineindymedia.org)

## SUNDAY, MARCH 24TH

### **Maine Maple Sunday**

Phone: 287-3491

Email: [getrealmaine@state.me.us](mailto:getrealmaine@state.me.us)

Web: [www.getrealmaine.com](http://www.getrealmaine.com)

Location: Statewide

Information: Maple Sunday - the day when sugar makers around the State are open to the public. See website, or call for complete listing of events

## TUESDAY, MARCH 26TH

### **FTAA Hearings**

Contact: Heather Curtis

Phone: 775-0270

Email: [commonknowledge2002@yahoo.com](mailto:commonknowledge2002@yahoo.com)

Location: St. Lawrence, 76 Congress St, Portland

Information: See March 22nd listing.

## WEDNESDAY MARCH 27TH

### **FTAA Hearings**

Contact: Adam Lynn

Email: [alynn@abacus.bates.edu](mailto:alynn@abacus.bates.edu)

Location: Bates College, Lewiston

Information: See March 22nd listing.

## THURSDAY MARCH 28TH

### **FTAA Hearings**

Contact: Matt Schlobohm

Phone: 946-4478

Email: [mschlobo@justice.com](mailto:mschlobo@justice.com)

Location: Location TBA, Midcoast Region

Information: See March 22nd listing.

## FRIDAY MARCH 29TH

### **"Daughters of Allah" Film**

Time: 7:00 PM

Phone: 942-9343

Email: [peacectr@gwi.net](mailto:peacectr@gwi.net)

Location: Peace & Justice Center, 170 Park St, Bangor

Information: Video on Palestinian women & Islam.

### **FTAA Hearings**

Contact: Matt Schlobohm

Phone: 946-4478

Email: [mschlobo@justice.com](mailto:mschlobo@justice.com)

Location: Location TBA, Kittery Region

Information: See March 22 listing

## SATURDAY MARCH 30TH

### **The Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance Annual Awards Banquet**

Time: 6:00 PM - 12:00 PM

Phone: 773-7393

Location: Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland

Information: RSVP for tickets, more info.

## THURSDAY APRIL 11TH

### **Film: "THE GLOBAL BANQUET: The Politics of Food"**

Time: 7:00 PM

Contact: Doug

Phone: 581-3860

Email: [dallen@maine.edu](mailto:dallen@maine.edu)

Location: 110 Little Hall, UMaine, Orono

Information: Focuses on control & abuse of global food market by "free trade" policies. Discussion after film. Free admission.

## SATURDAY APRIL 13TH

### **Maine teachers delegation to Cuba**

Contact: Renee Cote

Phone: 786-4325

Information: Sponsored by Let Cuba Live. Continues to Saturday, April 20th

## MONDAY APRIL 15TH

### **Youth Activism Gathering**

Contact: Cal Clark

Phone: 588-0347

Email: [urbanhood@yahoo.com](mailto:urbanhood@yahoo.com)

Location: Evergreen School, Hallowell

Information: Workshops on youth liberation, veganic gardening, anti-oppression, & more. Continues to Wednesday, April 17th. Call or email to register.

## TUESDAY APRIL 16TH

### **Conference Investigating Crimes**

**Committed by the FBI**

Contact: Joseph Balter

Email: [jbalter007@earthlink.net](mailto:jbalter007@earthlink.net)

Location: UMaine, Farmington

Information: The theme of this year's event is "Making Cruelty Visible."

## WEDNESDAY APRIL 17TH

### **"All About Consent: Sexual Assault on Campus"**

Time: 12:15 PM

Phone: 581-1228

Location: Coe Room, Memorial Union, UMaine, Orono

Information: Panel, part of Sexual Assault Awareness Week.

## SATURDAY APRIL 20TH

### **HOPE Festival**

Time: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Phone: 942-9343

Email: [peacectr@gwi.net](mailto:peacectr@gwi.net)

Location: Brewer Auditorium, Brewer

Information: Help Organize Peace Earthwide Festival. Organizational fair with 60 nonprofit organizations, entertainment, & more. Free.

## Monthly Repeating Events

### SUNDAYS:

#### **Merry Meeting Green Meetings**

Phone: 443-9005

Information: Meets every 1st Sunday, except holiday weekends.

### MONDAYS:

#### **Bangor Clean Clothes Campaign Meeting**

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Contact: PICA

Phone: 947-4203

Location: Peace and Justice Center, 170 Park St, Bangor

Information: Working to eliminate sweatshops and to encourage Bangor area businesses to carry clothing made in a socially responsible way. Meets 1st Monday of month.

#### **Greater Bangor NOW Chapter meeting**

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Contact: Joanna days, Deanna evenings

Phone: Joanna 989-3306, Deanna 947-5337

Location: Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, 362 Harlow Street, Bangor

Information: Meets 3rd Monday of month.

#### **Peace Action Maine Disarmament Committee Meeting**

Time: 6:00 PM

Phone: 772-0680

Location: Peace and Justice Center, 1 Pleasant St, 4th floor, Portland

Information: Meets the first Monday of each month.

### TUESDAYS:

#### **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill support group**

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Phone: 236-6106

Email: [ballou@midcoast.com](mailto:ballou@midcoast.com)

Location: Mid-Coast Mental Health Center, Union Street, Rockland

Information: Meets the first Tuesday of each month.

#### **Waldo County Peace and Justice Group**

Time: 7:00 PM

Contact: Susan Lauchlan

Phone: 338-0406

Email: [s\\_lauchlan@hotmail.com](mailto:s_lauchlan@hotmail.com)

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St, Belfast

Information: Meets the first Tuesday of each month.

### THURSDAYS:

#### **MAIN Meeting**

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Contact: Judy Guay

Phone: 947-4371

Email: [kjguay@imfi.net](mailto:kjguay@imfi.net)

Location: Maine Equal Justice Center, 126 Sewall St, Augusta

Information: Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods is a coalition of low-income individuals and organizations working together to gain control of our living conditions.. 2nd Thursday of month.

#### **Peninsula Peace & Justice potluck supper**

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Contact: Judy Robbins

Phone: 326-4405

Email: [robbins@downeast.net](mailto:robbins@downeast.net)

Location: Congregational Church, Main St, Blue Hill

Information: 2nd Thursday each month. Potluck supper and conversation, planning.

#### **Northern Lambda Nord Meeting**

Time: 6:30 PM

Phone: 498-2088 or 800-468-2088

Location: GLBT Community Services Center of Northern Maine, 658 South Main Street, Caribou, ME

Information: 2nd Thursday each month.

#### **Ellsworth Area Friends of Peace and Justice Meeting**

Time: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Contact: Beth

Phone: 667-0268

Email: [eadams@downeast.net](mailto:eadams@downeast.net)

Information: 2nd Thursday of the month.

#### **Union River Greens**

Time: 7:00 PM

Contact: Charlie Wiggins

Phone: 359-2283

Email: [eggplant@ct1.com](mailto:eggplant@ct1.com)

Web: [www.maineegreens.org](http://www.maineegreens.org)

Location: Ellsworth City Hall Auditorium

Information: 1st Thursday of each month.

#### **Northern Regional MAIN Meeting**

Contact: Judy

Phone: 947-4371

Email: [kriguay@infi.net](mailto:kriguay@infi.net)

Web: [www.bairnet.org/organizations/main/](http://www.bairnet.org/organizations/main/)

Location: Methodist Church, Orono

Information: Northern Regional Branch of the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods. Coalition of low-income individuals and organizations working together to gain control of our living conditions. 1st Saturday of every month. Call to check that the meeting is happening.



# Maine Solidarity Calendar

(continued from page 13)

## Weekly & Bi-Weekly Repeating Events

### SUNDAYS:

#### **Belfast Weekly Peace Vigil**

Time: 12:00 PM  
Location: Southeast corner (Hayford Building) of High and Main St, Belfast  
Information: Women in Black and Standing for Peace hold a weekly Vigil. Bring signs.

#### **Kennebunk Women In Black Vigil**

Time: 12:00 PM  
Contact: Lucia  
Phone: 549-3061  
Location: Main & Water St, Kennebunk  
Information: Silent Vigil

#### **Bar Harbor Peace Vigil**

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM  
Contact: Lee or Dee  
Phone: 288-4365  
Location: Village Green, Bar Harbor

#### **Bowdoin Peace Vigil**

Time: 4:30 PM - 5:45 PM  
Contact: Barbara  
Phone: 443-2899  
Location: Bowdoin College, Brunswick

#### **Blue Hill Candlelight Vigil**

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Email: [robbins@downeast.net](mailto:robbins@downeast.net)  
Location: Grounds of Town Hall, Outdoors on the Main St. front lawn, Blue Hill

#### **Brunswick Peace Vigil**

Time: 6:00 PM  
Contact: Barbara  
Phone: 443-2899  
Location: Brunswick Mall, Brunswick

### MONDAYS:

#### **Youth Adelantando Meeting**

Time: 5:15 PM - 7:30 PM  
Contact: PICA  
Phone: 947-4203  
Location: Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine, 170 Park St, Bangor  
Information: Youth Adelantando is a self-governed group of area youth who are committed to change. The group works especially on building connections between youth in El Salvador & Maine, issues of corporate control, & peace work.

#### **Lewiston Peace Vigil**

Time: 5:30 PM  
Contact: Matt  
Phone: 946-4478  
Location: Kennedy Park, Lewiston

#### **Rockland Peace Vigil**

Time: 5:30 PM  
Location: Rockland Public Library, Union St, Rockland  
Information: Discussions, forums, films may follow.

#### **Portland Vigil For Peace**

Time: 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM  
Location: Monument Square, Portland

#### **Bangor Outright Meeting**

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Contact: Drew  
Phone: 990-3626 or 1-800-429-1481  
Email: [drew\\_eman@hotmail.com](mailto:drew_eman@hotmail.com)  
Web: [www.maineaidsnetwork.com/outright](http://www.maineaidsnetwork.com/outright)  
Location: 80 Exchange St, Bangor  
Information: Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday. Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

### TUESDAYS:

#### **Bangor Candlelight Vigil**

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Phone: 942-9343  
Location: Federal Building, Harlow St, Bangor  
Information: Bring signs and candles.

#### **Portland Outright Meeting**

Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600 for long distance in-state.  
Email: [outright@outright.org](mailto:outright@outright.org)  
Web: <http://www.outright.org>  
Location: Outright Space above Portland Glass, 832 Congress St, Portland  
Information: Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

#### **WRFR-FM Volunteer Training**

Time: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Phone: 594-7476  
Web: <http://www.wrfr.org>  
Location: 20 Gay St, Rockland  
Information: Audio-production workshops and volunteer orientation are ongoing. WRFR is a new low-power community radio station in Rockland.

#### **Gay Men's Support Group Meeting**

Time: 7:00 PM  
Email: [centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com](mailto:centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com)  
Location: UU Church, Winthrop St, Augusta

#### **PACT Meeting**

Time: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM  
Location: Peace and Justice Center, 1 Pleasant St, 4th floor, Portland  
Information: People Against Corporate Tyranny (formerly SMEGAN). Meets every 2nd and 4th Tues.

### WEDNESDAYS:

#### **REEL Men Gathering**

Time: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM  
Contact: Sean  
Phone: 786-4697

Email: [acla@gwi.net](mailto:acla@gwi.net)

Location: Lewiston  
Information: A social gathering & movie night for gay/bi men men & gay/bi identi

fied transmen of all ages. We show the best in gay cinema. Good food, relaxed atmosphere, great conversation. Every 3rd Wednesday.

### THURSDAYS:

#### **"Creating Your Career"**

Time: 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM  
Phone: 800-442-2092  
Location: Bangor  
Information: "Creating Your Career" classes. Maine Centers for Women, Work, and Community. 8 week class, every Thursday.

#### **Camden Women in Black Vigil**

Time: 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM  
Contact: Lucia  
Phone: 549-3061  
Location: Corner of Rt. 1 and Atlantic Avenue, in front of Public Library, Camden  
Information: Silent vigil.

#### **WRFR-FM Volunteer Training**

Time: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Phone: 594-7476  
Web: <http://www.wrfr.org>  
Location: 20 Gay St, Rockland  
Information: See description on Tuesday.

#### **Central Maine Outright Meeting**

Time: 7:00 PM  
Phone: 621-6393  
Email: [centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com](mailto:centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com)  
Location: 11 King Street, Augusta  
Information: A weekly safe drop-in program for GLBTQ and allied youth ages 22 and under.

### FRIDAYS:

#### **Augusta Women in Black Vigil**

Time: 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM  
Contact: Lucia  
Phone: 549-3061  
Location: Lithgow Library, Augusta  
Information: Silent Vigil.

#### **Portland Q&A**

Time: 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM  
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600 for long distance in-state.  
Email: [outright@outright.org](mailto:outright@outright.org)  
Web: [www.outright.org](http://www.outright.org)  
Location: Outright Space above Portland Glass, 832 Congress St, Portland  
Information: A program specifically for those GLBTQ youth 16 and under

#### **Ellsworth Peace Vigil**

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Contact: Beth

Phone: 667-0268

Email: [eadams@downeast.net](mailto:eadams@downeast.net)  
Location: Bridge to Bucksport & Blue Hill, Ellsworth

#### **Lewiston/Auburn Outright**

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM  
Contact: Penny  
Phone: 786-2717  
Email: [outright\\_la@hotmail.com](mailto:outright_la@hotmail.com)  
Web: [www.outrightla.org](http://www.outrightla.org)  
Location: 145 Lisbon St, 3rd Floor, Room 302, Lewiston  
Information: Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

#### **Downeast Outright Meeting**

Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Contact: Mary  
Phone: 667-3506  
Email: [dean@downeast.net](mailto:dean@downeast.net)  
Location: 25A Pine St, Ellsworth  
Information: Every first and third Friday. Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

#### **Coastal Outright Meeting**

Time: 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM  
Contact: Coastal AIDS Network  
Phone: 800-207-4064  
Email: [coastaloutright@yahoo.com](mailto:coastaloutright@yahoo.com)  
Location: Rockland  
Information: For GLBTQ youth in Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties, ages 22 and under. Meets the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month.

#### **Portland Outright Meeting**

Time: 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM  
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600 for long distance in-state  
Email: [outright@outright.org](mailto:outright@outright.org)  
Location: Outright space (Above Portland Glass), 832 Congress Street, Portland  
Information: Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

### SATURDAYS:

#### **Camden Farmers' Market Winter Marketplace**

Time: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
Location: State of Maine Cheese Company, Rte. 1, Rockport

#### **Disarmament Vigil**

Time: 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
Contact: George  
Phone: 338-4776  
Location: Bath Iron Works, Bath  
Information: Ash Wednesday commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the Prince of Peace Plowshares for which Fr. Steve Kelly, SJ, is still in prison. Vigil continues every Sat. in Lent: Feb. 16 & 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30.



# BoundTogether

A MONTHLY COLUMN COORDINATED BY  
CLAIRE GELINAS

A long time ago, some people got an idea that they were better than other people. From the very beginning, this idea was mixed up with the idea that it's ok for certain groups of people to have more than their share of the world's stuff, and that it's ok for these people to decide what is right and what is normal for everyone.

Over the years, the idea grew and grew in some minds. It grew in the world too, until it was hard to find anywhere in the world that was free of this idea. The idea changed the way people felt about each other and thought about each other and treated each other.

We live in a world where governments and schools and laws and rules and other institutions and even homes are set up based on this idea. It's hard to escape it. It's hard to remember that with all our wonderful differences, we are all of equal worth, and we all have a right to use our share of the power among us.

Many problems in U. S. society make it hard for people to come together and work together for change over the long haul. This idea, and what has happened to us because of it, is one of the biggest problems. People who benefit from the way things are might be tempted to pretend to themselves that things are supposed to be that way. People who are told they're no good might have a hard time convincing themselves they're just as good as anyone else. Or if they know they're just as good, and they feel like they can't things, they might go around mad a lot of the time.

Partly for these reasons, most of us find it easier to do things with people we understand and trust, people who understand and trust us. We'd rather stay safe and comfortable than try to do things with people who might take advantage of us or get mad at us.

But we need all of us. So sometimes we need to get UNcomfortable and UNSafe. Because all of us, whether we are women or men or afrikan or canadian or queer or straight or rich or poor or young or middle-aged or old or raised-in-maine or whatever, have a picture of the world that others don't, a piece of the truth and a kind of strength that others don't. We need all of us, if we're going to make this world a place where we all want to live.

We're kind of stuck with each other anyway (BoundTogether) - but we'll never learn what direction we're BoundTogether unless we find a way for all the voices to be heard, and for all the voices to have power.

We hope this column in the Maine Commons will be one small way to help this happen. We hope you will be a part of it. We will focus on how to change the ways we see each other and treat each other, so we can work together to make a world we all want to live in. Send copies of articles about this topic; tell us about your experiences. Send pictures or cartoons. Send ideas or suggestions or information. Send your thoughts, including your crankiness and your dreams. If you think you aren't a good enough writer to send something in, send it in anyway (who knows where you got that idea in the first place, right?). Each of us has a piece of the truth that others don't - we won't all express it in the same way - but we each have a right to be heard. Let us hear from you.

*BoundTogether will appear in each issue, and is a joint project of the Maine Commons, Resources for Organizing and Social Change (ROSC) and you. Send articles, pictures, ideas, suggestions, cartoons, your thoughts, experiences, crankiness, dreams, etc. to [rutabaga@megalink.net](mailto:rutabaga@megalink.net) or call 674-2358 or postal mail to BoundTogether, 18 Stone Road, West Paris, ME 04289. We'll include as much as we can in upcoming issues of the Maine Commons. Be sure to let us know how to contact you.*

# Support from the Ranks?

BY LINNET PETERS

*On January 30th, some 50 Mainers traveled to New York City to protest the World Economic Forum. The WEF is a members-only conference held to decide the future shape of the world economy, & is a major proponent of corporate globalization. For the past several years the WEF has met in Davos, Switzerland. The protests became massive and the WEF moved this year's meeting to NYC. This is one Mainer's reaction to and experience of that event.*

"No problem," he said cheerfully. "I support 'em too...thanks for calling." Well, hooray! There at District 5, they agreed with us! So why were they still holding dozens of people -- who had committed no crime -- behind bars?

*"The State can't give you free speech, and the State can't take it away...you're born with it, like your eyes, like your ears ..."*

While I love that Utah Phillips quote, it does usually remind me that tongues can be cut out, eyes gouged away, eardrums burst. Of the fact that many have died in the struggle for freedom of speech.

But this here is the Land of the Free ... where I was born ... where I now know people beaten bloody for simply carrying a sign, or wearing the wrong t-shirt. It seems that, despite the myth, we are free to speak. Only until our voices join together. Only until what we are saying becomes too insistent ... until too many start to notice that what we're going on about fits their own privately whispered dialogues ... until our Actions speaking louder than words give the Powers Which Have Been glimpses of the precariousness of their stranglehold on the world. The world we all share. The world which will no longer support their wastefulness, the sterility of their vision.

So to that vision we say No. And NO again, more loudly. And we, unlike those drunk on illusions of power, do not kill to make our point.

One New York City policeman I spoke with at length just before last month's WEF meeting told me, "What we are ... are professional parents." That same guy later said, "Look, we don't like the corporations either ... we know they're using us ... but what do you expect us to do?"

I don't often expect, and actually find that parental metaphor to be a tortured one. Still, to stretch it out for just a moment: I am a parent, and know what it is to choose a course of action that has historically been set out for you, but which you know in your heart to be wrong. I also know the strength it takes NOT to lash out in anger, to instead move with the situation, to follow my conscience when a person whom I could easily overpower physically stands their ground, tells me my stance is wrong ... and I know it to be the truth.

Last month, 50 Israeli troops declared that they would no longer carry out the brutality ordered of them in occupied Palestinian territories ... many more have been emboldened by this action, and last I knew they numbered over 200. There is strength in numbers, fellow workers.

Until all people stop allowing themselves to be used as lackeys for corporate dictators they know to be in the wrong, the rest of us need to stand firm in the knowledge that "Freedom is something you assume ... then you wait for somebody to try to take it away from you. The degree to which you resist is the degree to which you are free." Millions are resisting, all over this world ... and I support 'em, too.

**These are answers to the acrostic on page 22. Don't peek!**

A. tibia; B. effort; C. Lurta; D. Arizona Highways; E. wool wool; F. Riker's Island; G. embattled; H. nosier; I. Charles The First; J. estate planning; K. Shah; L. estuaries; M. vacuum tube; N. eccentricity; O. noodle; P. pontoon; Q. in the hand; R. Lou; S. licious; T. appreciate; U. Radio Days; V. shrmp; W. officious; X. fifth of a fifth; Y. washed; Z. intolerance; Z1. sufferable; Z2. Dane; Z3. oasis; Z4. Manchester



# Ending Human Lack is Within Our Reach

BY JAN LIGHTFOOT-LANE

When the financially lacking can be heard with an equal voice, poverty will be a nightmare of the past. Americans -- in the land of plenty -- are so busily entangled in the blame game that they overlook the evidence that the world has enough resources for every woman, man and child to have a roof over their heads.

When a new way of sharing is found, each person will have adequate food, medical coverage, heat, utilities, justice, a vacation and the means to contribute to society.

A new way of sharing could be as simple as outlawing profits in excess of 25%. It will be something new. Not a rehash of failed solutions throughout history.

## The Attitudes Which Protect the Continuation of Destitution

Today, 70% of all Americans consider themselves the middle class. It feels more secure to consider ourselves in the smack-dab-middle than in the next-to-bottom income group. In reality, only 20% of the population belongs to this group of the real middle class.

As things are today, the middle-classes blame their plight of barely being able to make ends meet, not on unwisely spent taxes, but on the poor themselves. Economic experts attribute this phenomenon of wrongfully placed blame to the middle-class' knowledge that they did not do anything to cause their cash-flow pain, and their assumption that millionaires are lucky or they would also be millionaires. And, following up that personal-image-protecting line of thought, that the resource-poor make wrong decisions.

Those who consider themselves middle income must blame the poor -- and not circumstances -- or face the fact that anyone can become poor, even themselves. This wrongly placed blameworthiness is a self-protection defense of 70% of all Americans.

When the people who work as hard as they can -- only to receive inadequate pay to cover the rent, clothes and life's other essentials -- can inform those in the 70% of the realities of their lives,

the first step to better sharing will be upon person-kind.

## We Judge Others By Our Experiences

Logic tells us that someone making \$25 an hour must work 4 hours to purchase a new microwave oven. This is the reality of those in the middle-class section of society. Yet to someone making \$540 or less per month, the same microwave oven represents nearly 1/5 of the monthly income. It is virtually impossible to pay rent and purchase that energy-saving device.

The reality of the microwave is far different for the real middle income person, and the low-income person. Yet, the average income person looks upon the poor as if the income of those in poverty is the same as the person who makes \$25 an hour. This is human nature. Those with higher hourly pay often possess no other frame of reference.

The middle-class want to someday become millionaires or at least have enough income to feel like they can move ahead. If circumstances of the millionaires are seen as based upon "luck" or sometimes the exploitation of those with less, our self image would change. Those caught in the middle would have to concede, to gain what is considered success today, that they may have to become other than a compassionate person. They must demand excessive profits. This is not the self-worth in most of our natures. Yet the basis of capitalism requires such. We need to honor those who place the value of people above disproportionate profits.

## We Assume All Life Protecting Programs Will Function Correctly.

Society trusts government and private charities to give help to those who are worthy and in need. This assumption stems from our positive self-image of compassion. The system IS broken, the laws which should provide minimal aid are rarely applied as written. This means the safety net is not as wide as most assume it is.

As someone in the field of preventing homelessness, every day I see the so-called safety net -- programs intended

to protect and enhance life -- *purposefully fail*.

In Maine, state law provides those who fall upon hard times income enough to remain alive, but not enough to thrive. Yet, in reality, even this less-than-survival amount is denied. Yes, a few people might fleece the system. Yet for each person who misuses the system, hundreds who deserve help are deprived of assistance which should be available according to law.

Many who apply for aid are good people who have been downsized from their jobs, those inflicted with sickness, or disabled, or women with children, escaping domestic violence. Decent people in need are purposely PUSHED through the cracks.

In reality the public officials often fabricate non-existing conditions, as an excuse to deny help. This results in needless human suffering, and furthers the perception that America is no longer a land of equal laws.

This allegedly illegal -- and certainly immoral -- procedure is a governmental short-term cost saving maneuver. This ends up costing taxpayers more in the long run.

Here is one of many examples of a broken system. Regardless of a state "emergency" law, a providing mother who needs just \$250 to keep her \$400-per-month apartment, and give her children stability, is denied help. On the law-books, and General Assistance's own guidelines, an emergency is defined, as "any condition which leads to one being without, or about to be without, life basics."

Under the general public's worthiness theory, this mother who lost her job due to tending to her teenage daughter should have been appropriate for this one time assistance. Guess what? Instead the mother and two daughters were evicted. Then, when physically out on the streets, they were eligible for Shelter at \$600 a month. Only the shelter, as most, has been running above capacity. They are one of hundreds to be turned away. There are no openings at most shelters.

Nevertheless, families who could have been helped to avoid their being on the

streets, are wrongfully denied assistance; but once families are on the streets, they now become qualified for a few other programs.

This includes the General Assistance, which inhumanely denied the family a miserly \$250. Even after recovery, the family's tight budget is further squeezed. Instead of paying merely \$400 a month for rent, it went up to \$450. To make matters worse, their new apartment was also in the nastiest part of the city. To top things off, the family now qualified for federal funds on the rent deposit. That's if funds were not already spent. Also include the added hospitalization cost for the youngest daughter (she could not handle the added stress of moving and not knowing where they were going to lay their heads) at \$1,000 a week, picked up by the taxpayers, when the overwhelmed daughter went to a psych ward for a few weeks.

The extra amount taxpayers and the family picked up does not include the storage of furniture, the moving costs, time lost from the new job, etc. It has been found to cost at least 10 times the amount to overcome an eviction, lawful or not, than to prevent displacement.

Society would be telling all folks "You are of value," if the violence of poverty was cured. America controls the wealth to end poverty. It would cost less than is spent on the feeding of human lack of today. We can tell everyone they are of value.

If enough people were outraged by bad application of the law that leads to overspending of taxpayers' funds and 20% of all Americans not being able to pay rent and utilities, deficiency of our system would end.

People would be paid a liveable wage. Each paycheck would cover food, rent, utilities, clothes, medication, and vacation. This will happen as soon as the poor and former poor can speak for themselves and inform the population of the injustices done to ALL, by the low-incomes' inadequate paycheck.

*Jan Lightfoot-Lane is the program coordinator of Hospitality House Inc., which operates a statewide Homeless Crisis Hotline.*



# Women in Black

BY BETH WARNER

The first time I saw them I was just about to make the turn at the corner on Water Street. I was on my way to take my panting bored-out-of-his-skull dog for a short walk. We can walk around this stupid little pond down by the sewage treatment plant. It's not the greatest place but better than nothing. Plus, when I am busy running errands to stores on Sundays it will do in a pinch. I just walk him around and around the pond several times. There are usually some fly fisherman in the Mousam River which runs alongside this little pond, guys who are mute and are there mostly to get away from their women.

I had no idea who they were, these women on the corner of Main and Water Streets. All dressed in black and looking very ominous, mournful, like something out of a painting. Their black clothing was in deep contrast with the snowbank behind them. They startled me, they were so dramatic, so serious and surreal. At first I couldn't believe my eyes. I thought, they can't be real, not here, not in my town. How could this be? I have since decided that if they were to be painted the artist would be Magritte. Or Edward Hopper. Not much color that's for sure. Who are they and what are they doing here, I wondered. Then I saw something on one of their signs. I felt a growing excitement in my guts. WOW! AT LAST! Somebody here in Bush Country was visibly demonstrating for peace, actually speaking out about this lousy business in Afghanistan.

I found myself fumbling for my camera. The dog needed to be walked, he was in a lather, whining, I had promised him, he knows exactly where he was going, understands English or at least words like walk and pond. I had made the fatal error of telling him where we were going. Plus he looks out the window, drools and knows where he is and at this moment, he was just a block from the pond. I could stop quickly and take their picture but the dog would put up a stink and barkle, howl, carry on, protest. These women were all obviously silent. Decisions, decisions, decisions. I decided to walk the dog and on the way back get the picture I wanted, knowing full well that perhaps I would miss the shot. The dog and I hastily circumnavigated the pond. I cheated him and he knew it, but he was calmer now. We returned to where the women were standing. They were breaking up and departing. I parked, got out of the car, ran over to two of the women before they left and managed to speak to them. I got the

information I needed. They had been standing on this corner every Sunday at noon since November. They were part of an international association called Women in Black which started in 1988. I asked for permission to take their photograph the next Sunday. I found myself compelled to share some thoughts of my own about pacifism. My dad didn't serve in the military in WW2, was deferred by Roosevelt three times because he was teaching radio technology in the Brooklyn Navy School. I shared how my father's entire family in Europe disappeared during that war,



photo credit: Beth Warner Photo

that I have no relatives on this side of my family. None. I was invited to join them.

The next Sunday I decided to join. For some reason, I didn't feel right about just grabbing their photo and not doing anything more. It didn't sit right with me, made me feel like a vulture. These gals were like doves of peace. So I found myself deciding to stand with them. It was absurdly easy to locate black clothing, they stood for just one half hour, it was the least I could do. Give it a try, get my photo, be done with it. There was a little lint, cat and dog hair on my old black wool overcoat. I hoped no one would notice.

I decided to walk to the corner of Main and Water Streets. As I walked down my street, I found myself becoming filled with fear. Incredible fear. "This is irrational!" I said to myself. "Why am I so fearful? This makes no sense. I have done things that are far more dangerous and been in situations that are much more uncomfortable than this. Last year, for example, when I broke down on Chickenfoot Road in North Carolina and was stranded there for three days. Now that was scary! So what is this fear all

about? I am safe here. I am home. All I am going to do is stand for one lousy half hour silently on a street corner. What is this fear all about?" I got aggravated with myself. I rounded the corner by Cumberland Farms, went into the store, bought a small jug of chocolate milk. I was early. I intended this, wanted to see if there were any photos I could make of the Mousam River in winter from the gazebo in the little park which is right near the intersection where the Women in Black stand. Chocolate milk always calms me down.

As I waited for the women to show up, I wondered what I would do if no one arrived. What would it be like to stand there alone? I decided that I wouldn't be able to do it and that it wouldn't make sense because I couldn't very well take a picture of myself. A car pulled up. Two women stepped out, draping black shawls on their heads. One had a sign with statistics on it to do with numbers of people suffering in wars and unjust military actions around the globe. I greeted them with relief.

"You know when I was walking here, I became filled with fear. I said to myself that fear is irrational. Why is it that I am feeling so fearful?" I blurted all of this out to one of the women and she smiled and said "It is the political climate in which we are living. What you are feeling is quite typical of what we first felt. We are here in the heart of Bush Country. It is a normal reaction you are having, one to do with being in an area that is so solidly Republican."

I walk the dog now before or after noon times on Sundays. Real walks, not the stupid pond one. My Sundays have changed completely. I don't run around doing errands. I try to take some time off

and rest a little, treat the day much differently now than I did a month or so ago. It is like this conscious effort I have to make to slow down on Sundays. I bought the Sunday paper last week, something I haven't done in several months. I enjoyed doing the crossword puzzle like I used to do in the past. I can't figure out how Sundays got away from me, but they did. I know that they will get away from me again once the warm weather comes and the arts festivals start up. For now, I am trying to make the best use of my Sundays.

I have taken several pictures of our group. I have become re-acquainted with a woman I haven't had contact with in about twenty-three years. Our children were in the same play group when they were two years old and were prom dates in 1995. I have met younger women who are new to this area, women who are just becoming women, students with braids all over their heads. I have met older women in their eighties who are the only ones in our group with subscriptions to MS. Magazine. I have recruited a woman from a defunct peace organization and she recruited a former peace corps volunteer. They have come and joined the vigil. I find myself filled with incredible feelings as I stand there silently each Sunday, feelings of joy and pain. Something Pia Mellody talks about when trying to describe contact with higher power and states of grace.

Across the street from where we stand, several of us have noticed a flock of pigeons soaring overhead. They wheel through the grey winter sky and land on the roof of the giant old brick Kessler Shoe Factory building which is now the classy Lafayette Centre. There is one white bird in the middle of the flock.

Sometimes men in pickup trucks burn rubber as they go past us and holler totally irrelevant things like: "Why don't you go get jobs?" It is so ludicrous, particularly when I think of our older members, the women in their eighties. I think they have worked enough. Plus it is Sunday and I believe most folks have this day off. Another time, a man, in reverence and awe stood before us, asked if he could take our photograph. He thanked us for standing, encouraged us saying that what we are doing is incredible. He was positive, firm in his conviction that our numbers will grow. Little children and dogs seem to be the passersby in cars who are most interested in staring at us. Sometimes we get the V for Peace sign flashed or thumbs up or horns toot merrily. What is most

**WOMEN: CONTINUED ON PG. 20**



## Raising A Ruckus In Bangor: Laid-Off Workers Speak Out

BY ROXANNE MUNKSGAARD  
AND JACK MCKAY

Despite the blasting cold and wind chills in Bangor, things are warming up. The Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council sponsored a speakout and rally for workers on January 22nd at the Federal Building in Bangor. The Bangor CLC is the "union of unions" in the Bangor area including 22 unions, 2 retiree groups representing over 2,500 members. Members of the CLC, after meeting with staff of Senator Susan Collins, attending a meeting with Senator Olympia Snowe, and publishing several pieces in the Bangor Daily News, agreed that their U.S. Senators needed a reality check. In the last few months, there have been over 1,000 people laid-off in the greater Bangor area; times are very tough this winter for many families, and health insurance is a very big concern for everyone. Members of the Bangor CLC had been greatly disturbed that the airline industry - huge corporations - was able to receive a whopping \$15 billion-dollar federal bailout package, which passed through Congress like the speed of lightning. And not one dime has gone to laid-off workers! The CLC held this speakout and rally to give workers a chance to be heard.

The event had a good turnout -- members from many different unions across Maine -- and also

laid-off workers from Saucony and Dexter Shoe and other area mills. In true street theater form, a skit was performed, complete with props, "Getting through the Hoops." Foam airplanes sailed through the hoops labeled "Unemployment Office," "Insurance Companies," "U.S. Congress," and "Federal Government." The biggest hoop was labeled "Bureaucracy." But the unemployed workers, wearing sandwich boards, just couldn't get through the hoops - to the sounds of chants "No more waiting, no more hoops -- Laid-off workers need help now!"

Speaking at the rally and sharing their personal stories was Maria Kingsbury and Jeannette Seger (Saucony), Pat McCoy (Costigan IP Mill), and John Zachary (Eastern Fine Paper, Brewer). In addition, the Bangor CLC collected over 400 signatures on a petition which they presented to the offices of Senators Collins and Snowe after the rally.

As of the first week in February, unemployed workers from Saucony Shoe (Spot Bilt) have no health insurance. One example of this is the choice faced by Maria Kingsbury of Dixmont. It's simple math. She and her husband receive a combined total of \$1,324 in unemployment benefits. COBRA payments to continue health insurance cost \$760. That would leave \$564 to pay all other bills and live on for the entire month. Or, Kingsbury and her

husband could just go without health insurance and payout the cost for her necessary prescriptions for asthma and allergies -- which cost \$399 a month. At the time of this writing, a so-called economic stimulus plan that includes health insurance assistance for laid-off workers, looks to be near impossible.

This speakout and rally is just the

beginning of things to come. There will be ongoing rallies and meetings with laid-off workers coming up soon. People feel empowered when they are able to speak up and groups like CLC are planning to continue to show the people's power until something is done.

*Roxanne Munksgaard and Jack McKay are officers in the Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council.*

## Living Wage Campaign Takes Off In Bangor

BY ROXANNE MUNKSGAARD  
AND JESSE GRAHAM

The first meeting of the Living Wage Campaign Coalition met on February 13th to explore the possibility of kicking off such an undertaking in the City of Bangor -- the first in the State of Maine. By the end of this meeting, attended by 13 enthusiastic and energetic people, it was clear that they were ready to go forward!

Organizations represented at the meeting included the Dirigo Alliance, Maine People's Alliance, Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council, Maine Rural Workers Coalition, National AFL-CIO, AFL-CIO Community Services, Maine AFL-CIO, Peace through Interamerican Community Action (PICA), and several local unions and individuals.

The coalition sees the Bangor Living Wage Campaign as a vital way to build & sustain powerful labor/community/religious coalitions, provide organizing opportunities, empower, strengthen representation and build leadership skills among low and middle-income workers, community organizations, unions and congregations. Living Wage Campaigns begin to raise a whole range of economic justice issues and bring them into the public's eyes and ears.

Entering the 2002 election season, they hope that this campaign can serve as a tool of political accountability -- forcing elected officials, and the candidates running for office, to take a stand on working people's issues.

As the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, people are feeling more and more helpless and hopeless. The coalition agreed that the way to

turn this around is to educate people to the facts. They also agreed on a need to get people in office who will vote for what they want and work for them, and the need to elect good people. Once people get cynical they need something to do, and that's the gist of the Living Wage Campaign in Bangor. It's something concrete that can empower people and show people that they have a voice -- and need to make it heard.

The next meeting of the Bangor Living Wage Coalition is Monday, March 25 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Bangor CLC Union Hall, 20 Ayer Street, Brewer. It will be a meeting with hands-on strategy planning. Members of the Maine People's Alliance and the Bangor Central Labor Council will do a power analysis and a strategy chart for the campaign. Everyone will be involved in this and everyone is invited to attend all meetings. Contact Roxanne at 947-6424 or email: [munksgaard@midmaine.com](mailto:munksgaard@midmaine.com) for more information or directions to the Union Hall.

*(Editor's Note: The 3rd annual Living Wage Rally, organized by the Maine Rural Workers Coalition, will be held Fri. May 3, 2002 from 12-2 pm in the Hall of Flags at the State House in Augusta. They are inviting people to come to show support for a living wage for all Maine workers and their families. For more information, to volunteer your time, to make a donation or to arrange transportation, please call Dena at the Maine Rural Workers Coalition at (207) 783-4208)*

For more info on Living Wages, there are Questions and Answers about the campaign on page 19.



## A Corporate History Of Maine: Part 2

BY PETER KELLMAN

### Massachusetts Law

*In part 1 (printed in Issue 3, Jan/Feb 2002), Maine's first encounter with corporations was discussed. We start this segment with a section on Massachusetts law, which was Maine Law, until Maine's secession from Massachusetts in 1820.*

The United States Constitution makes no reference to the establishment of corporations, thus leaving the power to make those decisions to the individual states. Massachusetts passed a Manufacturing Corporations Act in 1809 which protected the creditors of cor-

porations by holding the stockholders liable for any debts the corporation could not pay. Now that is corporate responsibility!

### Dartmouth College

A critical case was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1819, the Dartmouth College case, which created a judicial doctrine that defined the relationship between state legislatures and corporations.

Dartmouth College had been chartered in 1769 by the King of Great Britain, George III. After the American Revolution, the State of New Hampshire sought to change the charter of the school through legislation. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that since there was no language in the charter or state law reserving the right of the legislature to make changes to existing charters, the changes the State of New Hampshire sought to make were unconstitutional.

### Maine Law

Only two years after the Dartmouth decision and one year into statehood we find the Maine legislature passing:

*An Act defining the general powers and duties of Manufacturing Corporations*, which included the following clause: Provided always, That the Legislature may from time to time, upon due notice to any corporation, make further provisions and regulations for the management of the business of the corporation, and for the government thereof, or wholly to repeal any Act, or part thereof, establishing any corporation as shall be deemed expedient.

Similar language was put into an 1831 law covering all corporations operating in the state. This section of the law is known as the "reserve clause" and its present incarnation reads as follows.

### *Reservation of power.*

Acts of incorporation passed since March 17, 1831, including this Act, may be amended, altered, or repealed by the Legislature, as if express provision therefor were made in them, unless they contain an express limitation. This section shall not deprive the courts of any power which they have at common law over a corporation or its officers.

So today's legislature can amend or revoke a charter and the attorney general can bring a case before the court asking for a charter to be revoked.

From 1820 until 1876 all corporations were established by special legislative acts. That is, individual laws had to be passed to incorporate every town, manufacturing concern, bank or cemetery society that sought to exist as a corporation in Maine. Interestingly, there is little in these early laws which distinguish between the incorporation of a town, textile manufacturing establishment, church or a cemetery society. Whenever a group of people got together to set up an organization, which they wanted or were required to have legal recognition for, they went to the legislature and asked to have a special private law passed allowing them the privilege of incorporation. An example follows.

### *An Act to incorporate Nichols Mills Chapter 9-1872*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled, as follows:

Sect. 1. Lyman Nichols, Benjamin E. Bates and William B. Wood, their associates, successors and assigns, are constituted and made a body politic and corporate by the name of the Nichols Mills, with all the powers and privileges and subject to all the duties and liabilities provided by the laws of this state concerning manufacturing corporations.

Sect. 2. Said corporation is authorized to manufacture cotton, wool, flax, in the city of Lewiston, to purchase and hold real and personal estate not exceeding twenty-five hundred thousand dollars in value, to build and erect such buildings and machinery as their convenience may require, and make all necessary rules and regulations for the prosecution of the same, consistent with the laws of the state.  
Approved January 19, 1872

Sect. 1. establishes that Lyman Nichols and associates may come together and be recognized as a "body politic." That is, they can pool resources and set up a form of governance among themselves and

## Living Wage Campaign Questions and Answers

BY ROXANNE MUNKSGAARD  
AND JESSE GRAHAM

The Maine People's Alliance, Dirigo Alliance, Maine Citizen Leadership Fund, and other progressive Maine groups are working in coalition to build support for a Living Wage Campaign in the City of Bangor -- the first in Maine! The following questions and answers should give you a clearer understanding of the campaign.

### **What is a living wage?**

A living wage is one that allows individuals and families to provide for their basic needs and gives them the opportunity to purchase more goods and services that are essential to maintain a decent standard of living.

### **What is a Living Wage Campaign?**

In short, Living Wage Campaigns seek to pass local ordinances requiring private businesses that benefit from public money to pay their workers a living wage. The ordinances cover employers who hold large city or county service contracts or receive substantial financial assistance from the city. Over 79 campaigns have been won in the nation!

### **Why a Living Wage Campaign?**

The concept behind any Living Wage Campaign is simple: Our limited public dollars should not be subsidizing poverty-wage work. Public dollars should be leveraged for the public good -- reserved for those private sector employers who demonstrate a commitment to providing decent, family-supporting jobs in our local communities.

### **What actually are living wages in Maine?**

Livable wage estimates vary by region of the state and by rural and urban areas. A single parent with two children in Washington County requires \$12.06 per hour, while the same family would need \$15.75 in Sagadahoc County, and \$16.48 in the Portsmouth-Kittery area. As a statewide average, a single parent with one child needs \$11.41 an hour.

### **What jobs currently don't pay a living wage in Maine?**

Many retail and service sector occupations routinely pay low wages (fast food restaurants, hotels, department and retail stores). Also municipal and state government jobs -- such as school systems, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, nursing homes, and home healthcare agencies, that are largely supported by public funding.

### **What does a living wage provide employers, employees, communities and the State of Maine?**

A living wage provides greater productivity and job satisfaction. In addition there is increased loyalty to an employee's place of work. Studies show that there is reduced employee turnover and the costs that are associated with it. If paid a living wage, families can purchase more goods and services, and communities would flourish perhaps reducing the need for public services and state taxes.

*For more information contact Jesse Graham at 990-0672, email: [jgmpabgr@prexar.com](mailto:jgmpabgr@prexar.com) or Roxanne Munksgaard at 947-6424, email: [munksgaard@midmaine.com](mailto:munksgaard@midmaine.com).*



**CORP : CONTINUED FROM PG. 19**

act and be recognized as the Nichols Mills.

Similarly "We the People" are the "body politic" of the State of Maine and we elect a legislature to pass laws which dictate how "We the People" want our state to be run. "We the People" also elect a Governor to execute the laws passed in our name by our legislature and interpreted by our courts. The stockholders of a corporation elect a board to govern in their names and the board of the corporation elects a President or CEO to execute the directives of the Board. The similarity between the governance of incorporated government bodies and other corporate bodies was driven home in 1829 when the legislature passed a law stating that, "The person legally presiding at a meeting of any corporation, shall have the same power and authority, as is given by law to moderators in town meetings."

Sect. 2. is an authorization from the larger "body politic" of "We the People," acting through our agent, the Maine State Legislature, to the subservient "body politic" called Nichols Mills.

We said that we would allow these few members of our society to act as one, to purchase and hold machinery, buildings and real estate with a value not to exceed \$250,000. for the purpose of manufacturing cotton, wool and flax in the city of Lewiston. And we also agreed that these individuals could set up an

internal form of governance to make the decisions necessary to carry out the function of manufacturing cotton wool and flax.

The two key facts here are (1) a group of people can act as one to form and be recognized by the state as a body politic; and (2) the entity can own property, sue and be sued. Unlike today's corporations, the Nichols Mill could not own other corporations or even engage in the manufacturing of anything other than cotton, wool or flax, and the work of the corporation had to be carried out in the City of Lewiston. That meant that they could close the mill if they wanted but they couldn't move the operation without changing their charter which would take an act of the legislature. Now, that was real "anti-runaway shop" legislation that the people of Winslow would sure like to see in place today to prevent Kimberly Clark Corporation from moving the Winslow paper mill!

BY PETER KELLMAN

**Next Month: A Corporate History of Maine, Concluded.**

*This column is the first of a continuing series: The Maine Lost History Project. Each month we will feature a column on the forgotten history of Maine - the "unofficial" history, the oral history, labor history, cultural history, forgotten victories, etc. If you or someone you know could write or tell (we will help in recording stories) some lost history, please contact the Editors of this paper.*



artwork credit: Tiffany Sankary

**WOMEN : CONTINUED FROM PG. 17**

important to me is that we are visible, whether people want to see us or not, we are there and we can't be ignored. I use this small slice of time to meditate, to pray for loved and hated ones, to think long and hard about things I don't have time to think long and hard about during the week, to feel the joy and pain. Some people may say we are crazy for standing on a street corner. I think it crazy to learn that trillions of dollars are being devoted to our military budget to wage wars, to kill, to maim, to plunder our planet's environment. Some people may say we are crazy because we are silent. I think that all the words and bites and sounds I hear on evening news broadcasts are far more crazy, totally insane.

I like what I have gathered from our local info flyer and from the Women in Black's website. I will share it here and then, be silent.

"Our silence is visible. We are silent because mere words cannot express the tragedy that war and hatred bring. We stand in silent vigil to protest war, rape as a tool of war,

ethnic cleansing and human rights abuses all over the world. We wear black to mourn for all victims of war and terrorism, to mourn the destruction of people, nature and the fabric of life."

*WOMEN IN BLACK is holding an International Women's Day Potluck on Sunday evening, March 10, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Main Street, Kennebunk. Come meet other women interested in working for a more peaceful and sustainable world. Free and open to all women to share. Please bring a dish or dessert. Monetary donations will be accepted for R.A.W.A., the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan. WOMEN IN BLACK is an international peace vigil that has been in existence since 1988. WOMEN IN BLACK of the Kennebunk area stands at Main and Water Streets, Kennebunk, every Sunday at noon.*

*(Editor's Note: Please see the calendar on page 14 for listings of weekly Women in Black vigils around the state)*

**The Maine Commons Classifieds**

will be a new concept in classified ads. In keeping with our non-commercial ideals, we will include listings of **free-for-the-taking items, trades, and wanteds**. We will not be taking classified ads for items for sale or rent - we want to encourage more trade, gifting, & barter.

Prices: \$2.00 for the first 30 words, then 10 cents per word after that.  
Maximum number of words: 100. Include text for your ad on a separate sheet. Make sure to include your name and contact info. Form below is for our records only.

I am listing a [ ] free-for-the-taking [ ] trade [ ] wanted

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

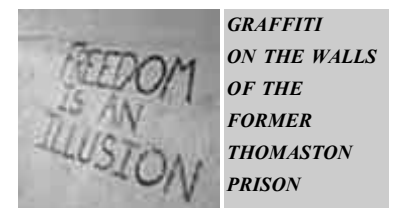
Please fill this out and mail with ad text and check made out to:  
**Maine Independent Media Center, PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**

We regret that we are unable to include a piece for our series on Prison Issues in Maine. This series will continue in the next issue.

If you are or have been a prisoner, or worked in a prison (especially in Maine) and wish to write about your experiences or insights, or if you are in Maine working on prison issues, we want to hear from you. Please contact:

**Maine Commons  
PO Box 1444  
Waterville, ME 04903**

or  
[editor@maineindymedia.org](mailto:editor@maineindymedia.org)







# News Blurbs

**Despite Colby College Economic Professor Michael Donihue's statement,** "Maine is not in a recession," closures and layoffs continue to occur through the state. Ansewn Footwear of Bangor closed in February, putting more than 60 people out of work. 25 workers were laid off from Sappi Paper in Skowhegan, with 100 workers taking either vacation time or unpaid time off during a week-long temporary shutdown. A Sappi spokesperson explained that the cuts resulted from a drop in demand for paper used in catalogs, magazines and corporate annual reports. In spite of the many job losses in the past months in Maine, Governor King has stated that he will oppose any extension of state-funded unemployment benefits because they would increase employer taxes. According to Maine AFL-CIO President Ed Gorham, tax rates for employers have been going down for several years, and the Unemployment Trust Fund, which the governor does not want to tap, is in the best shape it has been in for decades.

**Graves Supermarket, in Farmington, closed its doors** at the end of February, rather than try to compete a Super Wal-Mart moving in nearby. Graves is currently only breaking even, and is closing now, based on the experience of its Presque Isle store, which was hurt extensively when a Super Wal-Mart opened nearby. 45 people will lose their jobs as a result - jobs that provided a company-matched retirement fund, health insurance and up to five weeks of paid vacation. According to Keith Morris, a Wal-Mart spokesman, groceries are themselves are not very profitable for Wal-Mart, but they serve bring shoppers into stores to buy other items.

**The Union of Needletrade Industrial and Textile Employees,** or UNITE, representing workers at Biddeford Textile Corp., has agreed to negotiate a new labor contract with a partnership formed by Microlife Corp, a Taiwanese company that is looking to buy the mill. Microlife has offered to buy the mill for \$5.8 million, but has refused to go through with the deal if the union's demand for \$200,000 in stock options and \$300,000 in unpaid medical claims stood, saying that it would make the deal unprofitable. A year ago, Biddeford Textile filed for bankruptcy protection after laying off 350 workers. 250 workers remain.

**Forty-five former workers at Vishay Sprague in Sanford** have filed a complaint against the company in order to get the severance pay they say they deserve after being laid off last year. They are demanding a jury trial. According to Christine Sharpe, the former worker who initiated the suit, when workers were told last February that they were going to be laid off, they stayed at the company anyway. They did this instead of immediately looking for new jobs because they assumed they were going to get severance pay as they understood it functioned under Maine law. As they understood Maine law, laid-off workers receive one week's pay in severance for every year worked, if the company moved more than 100 miles away. Instead, workers received only six weeks of severance from Vishay.

**The next governor will not be receiving a pay-raise** as was previously planned. Due to a poor economy and budget shortages, the legislature killed the bill that would have increased the next governor's salary from \$70,000 to \$101,000.

**Governor King has proposed taking \$4 million** from the citizen initiative created Clean Elections fund to help cover state budget deficits. In order to balance the state budget, the governor is planning to, among other things, withdraw \$98 million from the state Rainy Day Fund. Then, in order to leave the Rainy Day Fund with an \$8.8 million balance, King proposes to withdraw \$4 million from the Clean Election Fund to replenish the Rainy Day Fund. According to Doug Clopp, of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, the proposal would essentially bankrupt the Clean Election Fund by 2006. State legislators are not looking favorably on the governor's proposal.

**According to a study released in February** by the Maine Children's Alliance, the number of children in state homeless shelters has nearly doubled in the past five years. Most shelter coordinators credited this to an increasing lack of affordable housing in the state.

**The Houlton Band of Maliseets is working** with the Penobscot Nation, the state Attorney General's Office, and the DHS, in order to create their own court system, or possibly share one with the Aroostook Band of Micmacs. They are doing this particularly so that child custody cases will be under Maliseet control. Members of the Houlton Band of Maliseets have experienced that the DHS will frequently take children from Maliseet homes and often place them with non-native families. In the past

5 years, the state has taken 29 children from the 742-member Houlton Band of Maliseets, or 11 percent of the 256 children under age 18 enrolled in the tribe last year. Of those, eleven were placed in non-native homes. The total percentage of children removed from their homes by the DHS in the past 5 years is less than one percent of children in the state. Many complain that the DHS will take children for reason of "neglect", which critics say is often just another word for poverty. Under the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, a tribe has exclusive jurisdiction over any custody proceeding involving an Indian child who lives on a reservation and concurrent jurisdiction with the state over families who don't live there. The law stipulates that native children be placed first with extended family, and then with tribal homes or other native homes. As a last choice, a native child may be placed with a non-native family. The Maliseets are looking to create their own court so that they can benefit from this law, and regain control of their families.

**The state of Maine and the National Parks Service** have signed an agreement that declares the state is responsible to manage the Allagash waterway as a "wild river," with input from the federal government only when the state requests it. This does not completely settle the controversy over Churchill Dam, that the state rebuilt in 1998 without a permit, but it has helped address some points of contention, agreeing to close down one access point and move another one at John's Bridge. It will also move a parking lot at Churchill Dam so it is not visible from the waterway.

**Endless Energy Corporation of Yarmouth is putting together** a permit application, to be submitted this spring, to build a \$50 million wind farm on the ridges of Redington Pond Range and Black Nubble Mountain. The wind farm would consist of 29 turbines, each 400 feet tall, that in order to build would require building logging roads on the mountains. The turbines would span two miles of mountaintops, have constantly blinking strobe lights, and generate the noise of 15 lawnmowers. The turbines would be about a mile off the Appalachian Trail, and visible from every major vista for more than 20 miles. The company believes that the turbines would generate 200 million kilowatt-hours a year, enough to power 33,000 Maine homes.

**A biotech park being built in Fairfield, Maine was sabotaged** by a group of anonymous activists this January. The group that took credit for this action explained that they put a sand/quickcrete mix in the engines, gas, and hydraulics of an excavator and a roller. They did this to economically damage the project which they explained they oppose because "Biotechnology is one more tool by the ruling class to control our lives and make more money. Only the rich can produce biotechnology and even if that wasn't so, we would want no part of it because it sees the wild as incomplete, or as lacking, needing manipulation. ... We want to be left alone. No more development. We enjoy life here and are sick of business men coming in and trying to dupe us into trading the good life for their wage slavery."

**Two scientists at the University of Maine Orono have completed** a two-year study that confirms that genetically modified (GM) corn can cross-pollinate with organic corn in nearby fields. They concluded that farmers who plant within 100 feet of genetically modified crops can expect pollen transfer. Their study warns organic farmers to be extremely careful where they purchase seed, since their own study was complicated by the fact that they found that bags of conventional seed they purchased for the study were contaminated with GM seed. In order for organic farmers to keep their certification, they need to avoid contamination by GM crops, so the study suggested that organic farmers keep crops far away from fields containing GM plants, be careful where they purchase their seed, and not harvest the outer rows of their crop.

## The Portland Tenants Union is open for Membership!

If you rent or are looking for housing in Portland (conscientious landlords are also welcomed to join and contribute to discussion, but may not vote), please feel free to email the PTU at [info@portlandtenants.org](mailto:info@portlandtenants.org), call 207-774-9393, or write to Portland Tenants Union, P.O. Box 4135, Portland, ME 04101, or the membership committee directly at [commonknowledge2002@yahoo.com](mailto:commonknowledge2002@yahoo.com).

The organization's mission is to be a united voice organizing and advocating for the highest standards of affordable rental housing and working to balance the power between tenants and landlords.



# ACROSTIC #264

by Herschel Sternlieb

Quote's Author: T. E. Lawrence

Acrostic directions: Fill in the numbered blanks next to the lettered clues on the left. Then transfer the letters to the grid according to their designations. The grid can also help you solve the clues. If you need answers to the clues, turn to page 15.

A. The shin bone

126 89 159 80 28

B. Attempt

67 22 110 7 134 253

C. Browning's Noble Moor.

213 220 157 78 224

D. Southwestern photo magazine. (2 wds)

70 108 86 237 155 113 73 192 2 207 203 181 228 21 5

E. Dog sounds in children's books. (2 wds)

8 140 131 115 170 37 196 239

F. N.Y.C. detention center. (2 wds)

194 123 94 172 62 229 254 99 35 200 68 11

G. Besieged

161 250 47 127 202 60 6 175 118

H. More meddlesome

179 100 222 187 18 244

I. Charlemagne (3 wds)

54 103 112 221 82 146 16 198 152 163 218 245 32 105 69

J. What's to be done with the money. (2 wds)

95 83 102 46 75 4 13 120 33 129 173 39 256 180

K. Pahlevi

162 184 176 97

L. Where rivers meet the ocean tides.

87 186 232 141 119 14 41 243 111

M. Invention that made radio possible. (2 wds)

29 138 215 117 165 20 183 49 251 149

N. Strange behavior

36 164 121 104 188 246 57 109 191 137 201 10

O. Paté, bean or noggin.

154 219 231 114 50 61

P. A type of float.

193 247 71 211 44 150 40

Q. A bird \_\_\_\_\_. (3 wds)

206 230 223 106 90 171 249 43 143

R. \_\_\_Costello or Gehrig.

160 30 185

S. Legal

51 236 59 178 225 42 31 148

T. Value, prize or esteem.

158 38 212 74 226 65 98 144 26 12

U. A Woody Allen motion picture. (2 wds)

235 58 72 76 84 174 133 169 130

V. Small, ubiquitous marine crustacean.

25 208 241 66 3 234

W. Exceedingly fond of offering advice.

195 125 45 167 85 23 240 190 17

X. One twenty-fifth. (4 wds)

151 182 139 96 205 255 27 135 132 93 197 1 199

Y. Cleaned with water.

227 52 210 55 216 19

Z. The opposite of Z1.

252 147 88 153 9 124 166 81 34 177 204

Z1. Capable of being endured.

53 156 101 77 15 24 214 136 92 116

Z2. Melchior, Bohr or Borge.

48 63 142 238

Z3. Desert rest area.

217 233 91 128 189

Z4. Industrial city in Britain and USA.

242 56 64 79 122 107 145 168 209 248

1	X	2	D	3	V	4	J		5	D	6	G	7	B	8	E	9	Z	10	N		11	F	12	T	13	J	14	L				
15	Z	1	I	17	W	18	H	19	Y		20	M	21	D		22	B	23	W	24	Z	25	V	26	T		27	X					
28	A	29	M	30	R	31	S	32	I	33	J	34	Z	35	F	36	N		37	E	38	T	39	J	40	P	41	L	42	S			
43	Q		44	P	45	W		46	J	47	G	48	Z	49	M	50	O	51	S	52	Y	53	Z		54	I	55	Y					
56	Z	4	N	58	U	59	S	60	G	61	O	62	F					63	Z	64	Z	65	T	66	V	67	B	68	F	69	I		
		70	D	71	P	72	U			73	D	74	T	75	J	76	U	77	Z	78	C	79	Z	80	A	81	Z	82	I				
83	J	84	U	85	W	86	D	87	L	88	Z	89	A	90	Q	91	Z		92	Z	93	X	94	F	95	J			96	X			
97	K	98	T	99	F			100	H	101	Z			102	J	103	I	104	N			105	I	106	Q	107	Z	108	D	109	N		
110	B	111	L			112	I	113	D	114	O			115	E	116	Z	117	M	118	G	119	L	120	J			121	N	122	Z		
123	F	124	Z	125	W	126	A	127	G	128	Z	129	J	130	U			131	E	132	X			133	U	134	B	135	X	136	Z		
137	N	138	M			139	X	140	E	141	L	142	Z	143	Q			144	T			145	Z	146	I	147	Z	148	S	149	M		
		150	P	151	X			152	I	153	Z	154	O	155	D	156	Z	157	C	158	T	159	A	160	R	161	G			162	K		
163	I	164	N	165	M	166	Z	167	W	168	Z	169	U					170	E	171	Q	172	F	173	J			174	U	175	G	176	K
177	Z	178	S	179	H	180	J			181	D	182	X	183	M	184	K			185	R	186	L			187	H	188	N				
189	Z	190	W	191	N	192	D			193	P	194	F	195	W	196	E	197	X			198	I	199	X	200	F	201	N				
202	G	203	D	204	Z			205	X	206	Q	207	D	208	V	209	Z	210	Y	211	P			212	T	213	C	214	Z	215	M		
216	Y			217	Z	218	I			219	O	220	C	221	I			222	H	223	Q	224	C	225	S	226	T			227	Y		
228	D	229	F			230	Q	231	O	232	L			233	Z			234	V	235	U	236	S	237	D	238	Z			239	E		
240	W	241	V			242	Z	243	L	244	H	245	I	246	N			247	P	248	Z			249	Q	250	G	251	M	252	Z		
253	B	254	F	255	X	256	J																										

Color-Your-Own  
2nd Maine Militia  
Mountain Man!



artwork credit: Michael Chute



## The “Stuff to Copy or Cut Out” Page

**New! The Maine Commons is now accepting ads and inserts! Take advantage of our statewide volunteer-powered circulation to promote your non-profit group or local business!**

Ads are priced at \$30-\$100 per issue, depending on size, with discounts for contract-based repeat ads. Write us for an ad form and full ad policy. We accept ads from businesses at our discretion.

Inserts (see example in this publication) are given a base price of \$250-675, depending on style, which covers the cost of 4-8 extra pages and the insertion of a header bar, but may cost extra for additional processing if any is necessary. Write us for a full specs and policy sheet for an insert for your organization or project. Currently we are not accepting inserts from for-profit businesses.

Please include this form along with a mission statement or some other literature from your organization or business that explains the nature of your work.

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization/Business Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Website \_\_\_\_\_

I represent a non-profit group or local business and am interested in an ad in the Maine Commons!  
Please send an **ad form!**

I represent a non-profit group and am interested in an insert in the Maine Commons! Please send an **insert form!**

Mail all correspondence to: **Maine Independent Media Center, P.O. Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**

### Maine Independent Media Center Volunteer Form

YES, Sign Me Up to Volunteer for the Maine Independent Media Center!

The Maine Independent Media Center is entirely volunteer powered. Please fill out the form below to volunteer your time and skills to this project.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Town/City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I can help cover events within (circle one):  
10 miles 20 miles 50 miles 100 miles of my location.

I want to join the: (see descriptions below)

- Tech Team**
- Print Team**
- Distribution Team**
- Financial Team**
- Media Team**
- Education Team**
- Grunt Team**

I can help with:

- Artistic work:** Graphic design and visual art both for the web site and the publication. We are especially looking for political cartoonists.
- Languages:** Translation, interpretation.
- Legal defense:** I am an attorney, paralegal, law student, trained legal observer.

**Other Skills/Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please Mail to:  
**Maine Independent Media Center**  
**PO Box 1444**  
**Waterville, ME 04903**

*Turn over for Donation Form*

## Maine Independent Media Center Forming Organizational Teams -- Get Involved!

The Maine Independent Media Center, of which this paper is a product, is almost a year old. Up until now, the work we have done has mostly fallen on a small group of 7-10 people, tentatively called the “core”. These individuals are founding members and a few others who have caught the fever along the way. However, the concept of having a “core” which does all the work is hierarchical and inherently against our ideals. So, as we phase out the core group, we are phasing in a new organizational model that will help to get more people more involved. The first step, we decided, was to form definitive teams -- some of which are loosely formed already. Here, then, are the teams we are forming:

**The Tech Team** maintains the website, both on the front and back end, and deals with maintaining and repairing hardware. People with computer programming knowledge (geeks) should join here.

**The Print Team** works on the monthly paper, gathers and edits stories, solicits advertisers, maintains the print website and calendar, and coordinates the paper’s distribution.

**The Distribution Team** makes sure that the Print Team’s papers get to set distribution points around the state each month.

**The Financial Team** deals with grant applications, fundraising, and sales of merchandise, as well as ads and inserts for the paper. It also deals with budgeting the money received.

**The Media Team** deals with video and audio editing and encoding, camerawork, maintaining the media server and website, and coordinating equipment distribution.

**The Education Team** organizes workshops and does outreach to groups and communities that might be interested in hosting workshops.

**The Grunt Team** does the work of addressing and stamping envelopes, transporting equipment, construction/renovation and other physical labor.

**The Administrative Team** is comprised of the members of each other team, and handles event planning, public relations, as well as facilitates communication between the teams.

All teams are coordinated individually, and have their own inherent structures. When you sign up for a team, you will be put in touch with that team’s coordinator.

Looking for the updated hardcopy order form? Due to less-than-optimal response, we retired the form in this issue. We will be posting an updated one on the media server in the near future:

<http://media.maineindymedia.org>



**Maine Independent Media Center Donation Form**

YES, I would like to support the Maine Independent Media Center!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a tax-deductible\* donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Maine Independent Media Center. (Donation must be over \$50.00)

I would like to make a non-tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Maine Independent Media Center. (Donation can be any amount)

I would like to donate a phone line or voice mailbox for the use of the Maine Independent Media Center: YES NO

I would like to donate the following computer or media production equipment to the Maine Independent Media Center: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to remain anonymous in my donation: YES NO

\*In order to take a tax deduction for a donation, you must have a significant portion (approx. 10%) of your year's income sent toward donations to nonprofit groups. If you want to make a tax deductible donation, please make checks out to our fiscal sponsor ROSC (Resources for Organizing and Social Change). Please make all other checks out to Maine Independent Media Center.

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make a copy of this form and send it and a check made out to:

**Maine IndyMedia Center, PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**

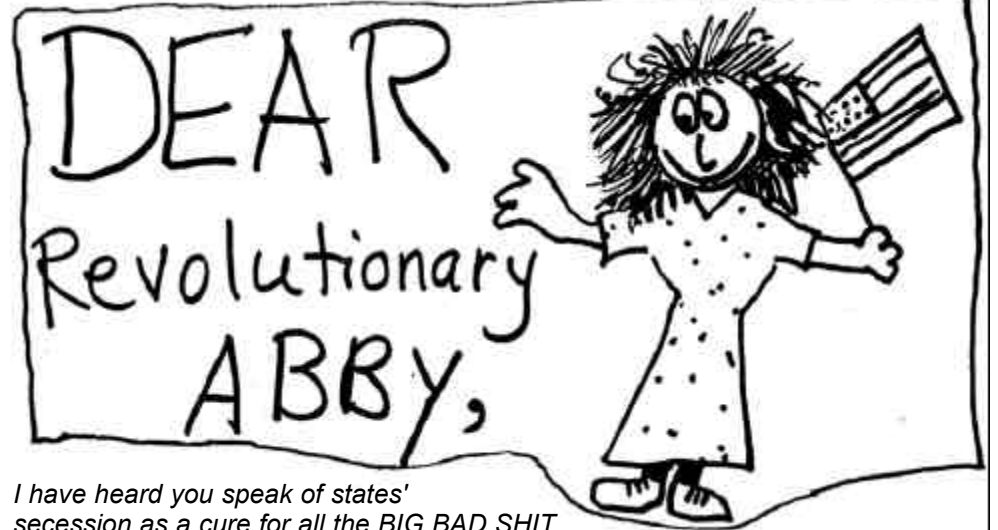
Turn over for Volunteer Form

Please Mail to:

**Maine Independent Media Center**

**PO Box 1444**

**Waterville, ME 04903**



*I have heard you speak of states' secession as a cure for all the BIG BAD SHIT coming down these days. States' secession would be not only radical, but risky ... and it couldn't happen anyway as nobody is for it. There's no growing enthusiasm for it. What exactly are you trying to say on this?*  
Yours, **United in Unity**

Dear UU,

Excellent question. A few folks of the, yes, tiny, secessionist movement have got some of us here at Militia Headquarters to really THINK about such an idea, to VISUALIZE it.

Picture Maine as its own nation. REALLY picture it.

Radical thinking is good for us. Radical "imaging", especially. Because, you see what I mean, you are now picturing Maine as a nation and Augusta would be the national capitol ... or maybe Bangor, more central.

Picture how easy it would be to go testify at your national capitol. To WATCH the proceedings. To bring the family. To familiarize ourselves with NATIONAL POLITICS.

And so easy to park! Nothing like Washington DC. Chances are you would not be robbed or killed either. Maine is such a homey place.

Each county could then have state-type capitols ... state-type legislatures. Imagine. Imagine the representation!

We might even decide to revamp the whole set-up. Instead of professional politicians with elections, campaigns, financing etc etc ... we might pick representation jury style. Or we might elect them caucus-style from EACH town ... regular people (like those who now go to the political convention). New ones for each session.

Real or figurative states' secession? Hmmm. It's hard to say if REAL would work or not. But VISUALIZING this awesome radical tiny nation is something we all might try, because only THEN will we SEE what it is that's missing from politics as usual in Washington, DC. Accessibility. Homeyness. Regional understanding. Visibility. Real representation.

Of COURSE, there are a lot of things we need to change to fix the mess we are in, the imperialist THING we have now for a federal government, the police state it is building, while the Mega-Multi-National-Mammoners direct it behind closed doors.

For one thing, we need to take Constitutional Human Rights away from the Corporate Charter. We need to KILL all corporate charters which KILL us or others or MESS WITH OUR REPRESENTATION, OUR LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, OUR RIGHT TO THRIVE.

The MULTI-NATIONAL MEGA-MEAN MAMMONERS occupy Washington DC and our State governments and the people's airwaves. Like cancer, they occupy EVERYTHING ... schools ... minds ... hearts.

For sure we need to secede! We need to secede from corporate America, consumerism, imperialism, and the mistake of thinking one-way-fits all.

So, yes, for a day, a week, maybe a few weeks, imagine Maine as a nation. Feel the vision of a democratic republic wash over you. Imagine the Bill of Rights is ours, the people's.

**Yours forever in truth, Revolutionary Abby**

**Subscribe to the Maine Commons!**

The Maine Commons is now taking subscriptions. Get 12 issues delivered to your door, and the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped this publication to stay alive. Many thanks!

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I am a student or on a fixed income ..... \$10

I don't have any money but I want to subscribe ..... \$0

I want to subscribe and I have extra money to help someone who can't afford it ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make a copy of this form and send it and a check made out to:

**Maine IndyMedia Center, PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**